

Ex Libris Jo: Gray:

Prima Religio, THE

COMMON PRINCIPLES
OF

Christian RELIGION

Clearly proved, and singularly improven:

OR, A

Practical *CATECHISM*,

WHEREIN

Some of the most concerning Foundations
of our Faith are solidly laid down, and
that Doctrine, which is according to God-
liness, sweetly, yet pungently pressed
home, and most satisfyingly handled

By that worthy and faithful Servant of Jesus Christ,
Master *H E W B I N N I N G*, late
Minister of the Gospel at *Govan*.

The second Impression, carefully corrected
and amended. *Blair*

1 Tim. 4. 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance
of these things, thou shalt be a good Minister of Jesus
Christ, nourished up in the word of Faith, and of
good Doctrine whereunto thou hast attained.*

Heb. 5. 12. *For when for the time ye ought to be teach-
ers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be
the first principles of the Oracles of God.*

1 Pet. 2. 2. *As new born babes, desire the sincere milk
of the word, that ye may grow thereby.*

Joh. 17. 3. *And this is life eternal, that they might
know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom
thou hast sent.*


E D I N B U R G H

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To the Reader.

Christian Reader ,



THE holy and learned Author of this little Book, having out-run his years, hastned to a maturity before the ordinary season, in so much that ripe Summer Fruit was found with him, by the first of

the Spring, for before he had lived twenty five Years compleat, he had got to be Philologus, Philolophus, Theologus & ~~ex~~imius, whercof he gave suteable proofs, by his labours, having first professed in Philosophie three years, with high approbation in the University of Glasgow, and thence was translated to the Ministry of the Gospel in a Congregation adjacent, where he laboured in the work of the Gospel near four years, leaving an Epistle of commendation upon the hearts of his Hearers: But as few burning and shining Lights have been of long con-

To the Reader.

tinuance here, so he, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, and many had rejoiced in his light for a season, was quickly transported to the Land of Promise, in the twentieth and six year of his age. He lived deservedly esteemed and beloved, and died much lamented, by all discerning Christians who knew him. And indeed the losse which the Churches of Christ in these parts sustained in his death, was the greater upon a double account, First, that he was a person fitted with dexterity to vindicate School Divinity, and Practical Theologie, from the superfluity of vain and fruitlesse perplexing questions, wherein latter times have corrupted both, and he set it upon his spirit in all his way to redress that native Gospel-simplicity, which (in most parts of the world, where literature is in esteem, and where the Gospel is preached) is almost exiled from the School and from the Pulpit, a specimen whereof the judicious Reader may finde in the little Treatise. Besides, he was a person of eminent moderation, and sobriety of spirit (a rare grace in this generation) whose heart was much drawn forth in the study of healing wayes and condescensions of love among Brethren, one who longed for the recovering of the Humanity of Christ.

To the Reader.

Christianity, which hath been well near lost in the bitter divisions of these times, and the animosities which have followed thereupon.

That which gave the rise to the publishing of this part of his Manuscripts, was partly the longing of many (who knew him) after some fruit of his labours, for the use of the Church, and partly the exceeding great usefulness of the Treatise, wherein, I am bold to say, that some fundamentals of the Christian Religion, and great Mysteries of Faith are handled with the greatest Gospel-simplicity, and most dexterous plainness, and are brought down to the meanest capacity and vulgar understanding, with abundant evidence of a great height and reach of usefull knowledge in the Author, who, had he lived to have perfected the Explication of the Grounds of Religion in this manner, as he intended in his opening the Catechism unto his particular Congregation, he had been upon this single account famous in the Churches of Christ; but now by this imperfect opus post humum, thou art left to judge ex ungue leonem.

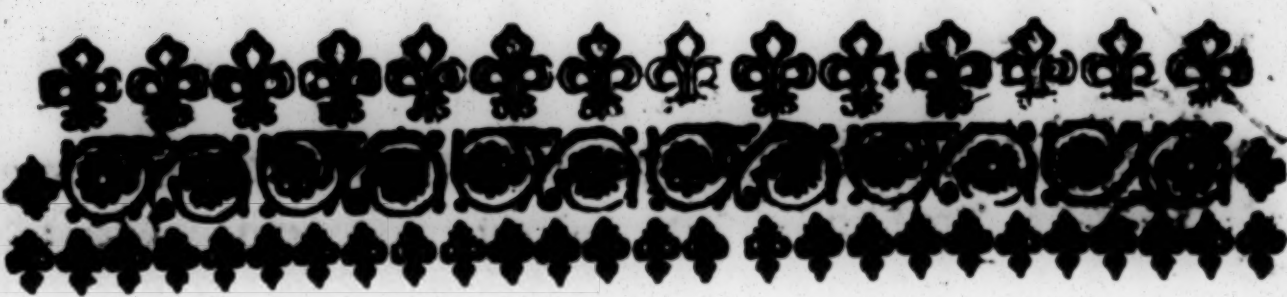
The Authors method was his peculiar gift, who being no stranger to the Rules of Arte, knew well how to make his Method subserve the matter which he handled (for

To the Reader.

though he tell not alwayes that his discourse
hath so many parts, thou mayest not thinke
it wants method, it being maximum an-
tis celare artem) that the same Spirit
which inabled him to conceive, and com-
municate to others these sweet mysteries of
Salvation, may help thee with profite to
read and peruse them, is the desire of him
who is

Thine in the service of the Gospel,
PATRICK GILLESPIE

The



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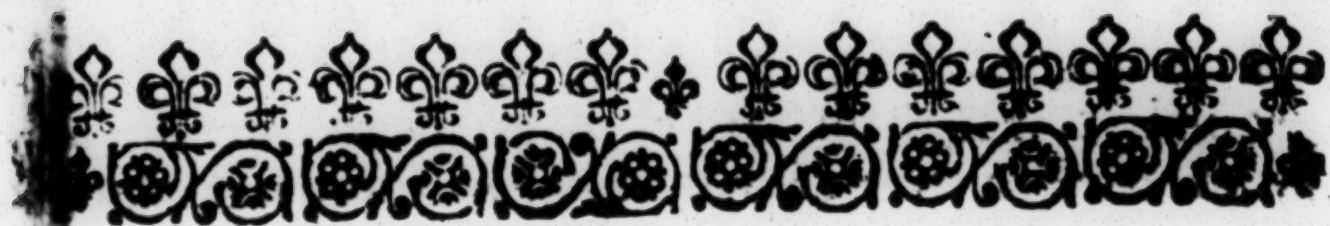
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Of



Of the chief End of Man.

Rom. 11. 36. *Of Him, and through Him, and for Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever.* And 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

¶ LI that men have to know, may be comprised under these two Heads, What their End is, and what is the right way to attain to that End : and all that we have to do, is, by any means to seek to compass that End. These are the two cardinal points of a mans knowledge, and exercise ; *Quo, & quâ cundum est, Whither to go, and what way to go.* If there be a mistake in any of these fundamentals, all is wrong. All arts and sciences have their principles and grounds, that must be presupposed to all solide knowledge and right practice ; So hath the true Religion some fundamentall principles, which must be laid to heart, and imprinted into the soul, or, there can be no superstructure of true and saving knowledge ; and no practice in Christianity that can lead to a Blessed End. But as the principles are not many, but a few common and easie grounds, from which all the conclusions of art are deduced, so the Principles of true Religion are few and plain, they needed neither burden your memory, nor confound your understanding, that which may save you is neer hand, saith the Apostle, Rom. 10, *in thy mouth* : it is neither too far

B

above

above us, nor too far below us. But alas your considering of these common, and few, and grounds, makes them both burdensome to the memory, and dark to the understanding. As there is nothing so easie, but it becometh difficult, if you do it against your will, *nihil est tam facile, quin difficile fiat, si iustus feceris*, so there is nothing so plain, so common, but it becometh dark and hard, if you do not indeed consider it, and lay it to heart.

That which is in the first place to be considered, our End. As in all other arts, and every petty business, it hath the first place of consideration, so especially in the Christian Religion. It is the first of all humane actions, and the first Principle of all deliberate motions. Except you would walk at a venture, not knowing whither you go, or what you do, you must once establish this and fix it in your intention, what is the great End and purpose wherefor you are created, and sent into the world? If this be either not questioned, or not rightly constituted, you are not but spend your time, *Vel nihil agendo, vel aliter agendo, vel male agendo*, you must either do nothing, or nothing to purpose, or that which is worse, that which will undo you. It is certainly the wrong establishing of this one thing, that maketh the most part of our motions, either altogether irregular, or unprofitable, or destructive and hurtful: Therefore, as this Point hath the first place in your Catechism, so ought to be first of all laid to heart, and pondered, the one necessary thing. *One thing is needfull*, saith Christ, *Luk. 10. 42.* and if any thing be in a Superlative degree needfull, this is it. O that you would choose to consider it as the necessity and weight of it requires.

We have read two Scriptures, which speaks to the ultimate and chief End of man, which is the glorifying of God by all our actions, and words, and thoughts. In which we have those things of Importance. 1. That Gods glory is the End of our being. 2. That Gods glory should be the End of our doing. And, 3. That

ground of both these, because both being and doing are from him, therefore, they ought to be both for him: He is the first cause of both, and therefore, he ought to be the last End of both. *Of him, and through him, are all things, and therefore all things are also for him, and therefore, all things should be done for him.*

God is Independent altogether, and self-sufficient, this is his royal prerogative, wherein he infinitely transcends all created perfections: *he is of himself, and for himself, from no other, and for no other, but of him, and for him are all things.* He is the fountain head, you ought to follow all the streams up to it, and then to rest: for you can go no further. But the creature, even the most perfect work besides God, it hath these two Ingredients of *Limitation*, and *Imperfection* in its compose: *It is from another, and for another.* It hath its rise out of the fountain of Gods Immense power and goodnesse, and it must run towards that again, till it empty all its faculties, and excellencies, into that same sea of goodness. Dependence, is the proper notion of a created being: dependence upon that Infinite Independent Being, as the first Immediate cause, and the last Immediate End: you see then, that this principle is engraven in the very nature of man. It is as certain and evident, that man is made for Gods glory, and for no other end, as that he is from Gods power, and from no other cause: Except men did violent their own conscience, and put out their own eyes, as the Gentiles did, *Rom. 1. 19. &c. That which might be known of mans chief End, is manifest in them, so that all men are without excuse.* As God his Being is Independent, so that he cannot be expressed by any name, more suitable then such as he taketh to himself; *I am that I am*, Importing a boundlesse, ineffable, absolute, and transcendent Being, beside which, no creature deserveth so much as to have the name of Being, or, to be made mention of in one day with his Name, because his glorious light maketh the poor derived shadow of light in other creatures, to disappear, and to evanish.

out of the World of Beings : So it is , the glory
 perfection of his Nature , that he doth all things
 himself, for his own Name, *Prov. 16. 4.* and his
 is as dear to him, as himself, *Isa. 42. 8.* *I am the*
that is my Name, and therefore my glory I will give
other, and 48. 11. This is no ambition indeed. *T*
man to seek his own glory, or, search into it, is no
Prov. 25. 27. but rather a mans shame : Self-seeking
 In creatures, is a monstrous and incongruous thing
 is as absurd , and unbeseeming a creature , to seek
 own glory , as to attribute to it self its own Being
 Shall the thing formed say to the Potter, *thou hast*
made me , that were ridiculous : and shall the thing
 formed say, *its made for it self* , that were as ridi-
 culous. Self-denial, is the ornament and beauty of
 creature , and therefore humility is an ornament
 cloathing, *1 Pet. 5. 5.* *And honour upholds the humble*
in spirit , *Prov. 29. 23.* But Gods self-seeking ,
 seeking of his own glory , is his eminent Excellence
 is indeed his glory , because he is , and there is
 else, there is nothing beside him, but that which
 issued forth from his Incomprehensible fulnesse :
 therefore it is all the reason of the world , that
 is the beginning, so he should be the end of all things
Rev. 1. 8. And there is the more reason of it, that
 Majesties seeking of his own glory, is not prejudicial
 to the creatures good , but the very communication
 of his fulnesse goes alongs with it : So that in glor-
 ying himself, he is most beneficial to his own crea-
 tures. Poor creatures, indigent at home, yet are proud
 of nothing, and endeavours in seeking of themselves
 to engrosse all perfections into their own bosoms
 ambition , and vain glory, robs and spoils others
 excellencies to cloath it self withal, & then boasts it
 in these borrowed feathers. But our blessed Lord
 then doing most for our advantage, when he does
 for his own glory ; He needs not go abroad to
 perfection, but to manifest what he is in himself :
 communicats of him self to us. O blessed self-seeking

that gave us a being, and well-being, that makes no advantage by it, but gives advantage. He hath the honour of all, but we have the profit of all.

All things are of him, and for him; But man in a peculiar and proper way. As God in making of man was pleased of his goodnesse, to stamp him with character of his own Image, and in this he puts a difference between man and other creatures; that he would have more plain and distinct Engravings of Divine Majesty upon him, which might shew the glory of the Work-man: So it appears, that he is in a singular way made for God, as his last End. As he is nearer God, as the Beginning, and cause, then other creatures; so he is placed nearer God as the End. All creatures are made *ultimò*, lastly for God, yet they are all made *proximè*, nextly for man: Therefore David calls out wondering, *O Lord, what is man that thou magnifiest him, and hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands, and put all under his feet*, Psal. 8. 6. The creature comes out in a direct line from God, as the beams from the body of the Sun, and it is directed towards the use and service of mankind, from whom all the Excellency and perfection that is in it should reflect towards God again, man is both *proximè* & *ultimò* for God. We are to return immediately to the Fountain of our Being; and thus our happiness and well-being is perpetuated. There is nothing intervening between God and us, that our use and service and honour should be directed towards: But all the gifts and perfections of the creature, that are among the rest of the creatures, meets all in man as their center, for this purpose, that he may return with them all to the glorious Fountain from whence they issued: thus we stand next God, and in the middle between God and other creatures. This, I say, was the condition of our creation, we had our Being immediately from God as the Beginning of all, and we were to have our happiness and well-being by returning immediately to God as the End of all, But sin coming

in between God and us, hath displaced us, so that we cannot now stand next God, without the intervention of a Mediator, and we cannot stand between God and creatures, to offer up their praises to him; But there is one Mediator between God and man, that offers both mans praises, and the creatures songs which meet in man.

Now, seeing God hath made all things for himself, and especially man for his own glory, that he may shew forth in him the glory and excellency of his power, goodnesse, holinesse, justice, and mercy: It is not only most reasonable, that man should do such things that he doth to the glory of God, but it is the beauty and perfection of a man, the greatest affection that can be to his Being, to glorifie God by his Being. We are not our own, therefore, we ought not to live to our selves, but to God whose we are.

But you may ask, what it is to glorifie God? Do our goodnesse extend to him? Or, is it an advancement to the Almighty, that we are righteous? No indeed, and herein is the vast difference between Gods glorifying of us, and sanctifying of us, and our glorifying and sanctifying of him: *God calls things that are, and makes them to be*; But we can do no more, we call things that are, and that far below what they are. Gods glorifying is creative, ours only declarative. We make us such, we do no more but declare him to be such: This then is the proper work that man is created for, to be a witnesse of Gods glory, and to give testimony to the appearances, and out-breakings of his power, and justice, and mercy, and truth. Other creatures are called to glorifie God, but it is rather a Proclamation to dull and senselesse creatures, and a provocation of them to their duty. As Christ said to the Pharisees, *If these children hold their peace, the stones would cry out.* So may the Lord turn himself from stupid and senselesse man, to the stones, and woods, and seas, and sun, and moon, and exhort them to mans duty, the more to provoke and stir up our dulnesse.

fulnesse, and to make us consider, that it is a greater
 wonder, that man whom God hath made so glorious,
 can so little expresse Gods glory ; then if stupid and
 senselesse creatures should break out in singing, and
 praising of his Majesty. The creatures are the books
 wherein the lines of the song of Gods praises are
 written, and man is made a creature capable to read
 them, and to tune that song. They are appointed to
 bring in Brick to our hand, and God has fashioned us
 for this imployment, to make such a building of it :
 We are the mouth of the creation, but ere God want
 praises, when our mouth is dumb, and our ears deaf,
 God will open the mouths of Asses, of Babes and
 Sucklings, and in them perfite praises, *Psalm. 8. 1, 2.*
Epictetus said well, *Si luscinia essem, canerem ut Lusci-*
nia; cum autem homo sim, quid agam? Laudabo Deum,
hec unquam cessabo. If I were a Lark, I would sing
 as a Lark, but seeing I am a man, what should I do
 but praise God without ceasing? It is as proper to us
 to praise God, as for a bird to chaunt: All beasts
 have their own sounds, and voices peculiar to their
 own nature; this is the natural sound of a man. Now,
 as you would think it monstrous, to hear a melodious
 Bird croaking as a Raven, so it is no lesse monstrous
 and degenerat, to hear the most part of the discourses
 of men, savouring nothing of God. If we had known
 that Innocent Estate of man, O how would we think
 he had fallen from heaven! We would imagine, that
 we were thrust down from heaven, where we heard
 the melodious songs of Angels, into hell, to hear the
 howlings of damned spirits. This then is that we are
 bound unto, by the bond of our creation; this is our
 proper office and station. God once set us into,
 when he assigned every creature its own use and exer-
 cise: this was our portion (and O the noblest of all,
 because nearest the Kings own person) to acknow-
 ledge in our hearts inwardly, and to expresse in our
 words and actions outwardly, what a one he is, ac-
 cording as he hath revealed himself in his word, and
 works:

works : Its great honour to a creature, to have meanest imployment in the Court of this great King. But, O what is it to be set over all the Kings house, and over all his Kingdom ? but then what is that respect of this, to be next to the King, to wait on his own Person (so to speak) therefore the good man is described, as a waiting maid, or servant, *Psalm 123. 2.* Well then, without more discourse upon without multiplying of it into particular branches to glorifie God, *Is in our souls to conceive of him, meditate on his Name, till they receive the impression and stamp of all the letters of his glorious Name, and then expresse this in our words and actions, in commending him, and obeying of him.* Our soul should be as wax, to expresse the seal of his glorious Attributes, of justice, power, goodnesse, holinesse, and mercy : and as water that receives the beams of the Sun, reflects them back again, so should our spirits receive the sweet warming beams of his love and glorious excellency, and then reflect them towards his Majesty with the desires and affections of our souls. All our thoughts of him, all our affections towards him should have the stamp of singularity, such as may declare there is none like him, none besides him : our love, our meditation, our acknowledgement should have this character on their front, *There is none beside thee, thou art, and none else :* And then a soul should be bound by the cords of affection to him, and admiration of him, be bound to serve him. Creation puts on an obligation to glorifie him in our body and spirit which are his ; but affection only puts that to exercise : all other bonds leave our natures at liberty, but this constrains, *2 Cor. 5. 13.* It binds on all bonds, ties on us all divine obligations. Then a soul will glorifie God, when love so units it to God, and makes it one spirit with him, that his glory becomes its honour, and becomes the principle of all our inward affections, and outward actions. It is not alwayes possible to have an expresse particular thought of God

and his glory, in every action, and meditation; but for the most part it ought to be so: And if souls were accustomed to meditation on God, it would become their very nature, *altera natura*, pleasant and delightful. However, if there be not alwayes an expresse intention of Gods glory, yet there ought to be kept alwayes such a disposition and temper of spirit, as it may be construed to proceed from the intention of Gods glory, and then it remains in the seed and fruit, if not in it self.

Now when we are speaking of the great end and purpose of our Creation, we call to mind our lamentable and tragical fall from that blessed station we were constitute into, *All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God*, Rom. 3. 23. His being in the world was for that glory, and he is come short of that glory: O strange short coming! short of all that he was ordained for, what is he now meet for? For what purpose is that chief of the works of God now? The salt, if it lose its saltnesse its meet for nothing, for wherewithall shall it be seasoned, *Mark 9. 50*. Even so when man is rendered unfit for his proper end, he is meet for nothing, but to be cast out and trod upon, he is like a withered branch that must be cast in the fire, *Job. 15. 6*. Somethings, if they fail in one use, they are good for another, But the Best things are not so, *Corruptio optimi pessima*: As the Lord speaks to the house of Israel, *Shall wood be taken of the vine-tree for any work, even so is the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, *Ezech. 15. 2, 3, 4, 5*. If it yeeld not wine, it is good for nothing; so if man do not glorifie God, if he fall from that, he is meet for nothing, but to be cast into the fire of hell, and burnt for ever, he is for no use in the Creation, but to be fuel to the fire of the Lords indignation.

But behold the goodnesse of the Lord, and his kindness, and love hath appeared toward man, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us through Jesus Christ, *Tit. 3. 4, 5*.

Our

Our Lord Jesus by whom all things were created for whom, would not let this excellent workmanship perish so, therefore he goes about the world in Redemption: a second Creation more laborious also more glorious then the first, that so he might glorifie his Father, and our Father: Thus the bread is made up, thus the unsavoury salt is seasoned, thus the withered branch is quickened again for that fruitful fruit of praises and glorifying of God. This is the end of his second Creation, as it was of the first: *These are his workmanship created to good works in Christ Jesus, Eph. 2. 10.* This is the work of God, to believe in him, to set to our seal, and to give our testimony to all his Attributes, *Job. 6. 29. and 3. 23.* We are bought with a price, and therefore we ought to glorifie him with our souls and bodies, he made us with a word, and that bound us, but now he has made us again and payed a price for us, and so we are twice bound not to be our own but his, *1 Cor. 6. 19. ver.* And so to glorifie him in our bodies and spirits. I beseech you gather your spirits, call them home about the businesse, we once came short of our Gods glory and our happinesse; but know that it is attainable again, we lost both, but both are found in Christ. Awake then and stir up your spirits, else it shall be double condemnation, when we have an offer of being restored to our former blessed condition, to love our present misery better. Once establish this point within your souls, and therefore ask why came I hither? to what purpose am I come to the world? If you do not ask it, what will you answer when he asks you at your appearance before his Tribunal? I beseech you what will many of you say in that day, when the Master returns and takes an account of your dispensation? you are sent into the world only for this businesse, to serve the Lord, now what will many of you answer? If ye speak the truth (as then you must do it, you cannot lie then) you must say, Lord, I spent my time in serving my own lust.

rusts, I was taken up with other busineses, and had no leasure, I was occupied in my calling. Even if an Ambassadour of a King should return him his account of his negotiation, I was busie at cards and dice, I spent my mony and did wear my cloaths. Though you think your plowing, and harrowing, and trafficking, and reaping very necessary, yet certainly, these are but as trifles and toyes to the main businesse. O what a dreadful account will souls make, they come here for no purpose but to serve their bodies and senses, to be slaves to all the creatures, which were once put under mans feet: Now man is under the feet of all, and he has put himself up. If you were of these creatures, then you might be for them: you seek them as if you were created for them, and not they for you, and you seek your selves, as if you were of your selves, and had not your discent of God. Know my beloved, that you were not made for that purpose, nor yet redeemed either to serve your selves, or other creatures, but that other creatures might serve you, and ye serve God, Luk. 1. 74, 75. And this is really the best way to serve our selves and to save our selves, to serve God: self-seeking, is self-destroying, self-deceiving, is self-saving, soul-saving, *He that seeketh to save his life shall lose it, and he that loseth it shall find it, and he that denies himself and follows me, is my disciple.* Will ye once sit down in good earnest about this businesse. It is lamentable to be yet to begin to learn to live, when ye must die, ye will be out of the world almost, ere ye bethink your self, why come I into the world? *Quidam tunc vivere incipiunt, cum desinendum est, immo quidam ante vivere desierunt quam inciperent*, this is of all most lamentable, many souls end their life, before they begin to live, for what is our life, but a living death: while we do not live to God, and while we live not in relation to the great end of our life and being? the glory of God. It were better, saith Christ, that
such

such had never been born, you who are created again in Jesus Christ, it most of all concerns you to ask, Why am I made? And why am I redeemed? And to what purpose? It is certainly, that ye may glorifie your heavenly Father, *Matth. 5. 16. 58. 13.* And you shall glorifie him if you bear forth much fruit and continue in his love, *Joh. 15. 1.* And this you are chosen and ordained unto, *vers. 16.* And therefore abide in him, that you may bear forth fruit, *vers. 4.* And if you abide in him by believing, you do indeed honour him, and he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father, *Joh. 5. 23.* Here is a compendious way to glorifie God: receive salvation of him freely, righteousness and eternal life, and this sets to a seal to Gods truth, and his grace and mercy; and whoso counts the Son worthy to be a Saviour to them, and sets to their seal of approbation to him whom God the Father hath sent, and sealed, he also honours the Father, and therefore that honoureth the Father, hath it not for nothing. *For them that honoureth me, I will honour, 1 Sam. 2. 30.* saith the Lord, *And he that serves me, him will I honour, my Father honour, Joh. 12. 26.* As the believing soul cares for no other, and respects no other but God, so he respecteth no other, but such a soul, I dwell in the humble, and look unto the contrary, there is mutual respects and honours, God is the delight of such a soul, and such a soul is Gods delight, that soul sets God in a high place, in a throne in its heart, and God sets that soul in a heavenly place with Christ, *Eph. 2. 6.* yea he comes down to dwell with us, and dwell in us, off his throne of Majesty, *Isa. 66. 1, 2. and 57. 15.*

al. 73. 24. to the end. *Thou wilt guide me with thy counsell, &c. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? &c. It is good for me to draw neerer to God, 1 Joh. 1. 3. These things declare we to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And Joh. 17. 21, 22, 23. That they all may be one as we are one: I in them, and they in me, that they may be perfect in one, &c.*

It is a matter of great consolation, that Gods glory and our happinesse are linked together: so that whosoever sets his glory before them singly to aim at, they take the most compendious and certain way to true blessednesse. His glory is the ultimate end of man, and should be our great and last hope; But our happinesse, which consists in the enjoyment of God, is subordinate to this, yet inseparable from it. The end of our Creation is communion and fellowship with God, therefore man was made with an immortal soul capable of it: and this is the greatest dignity and eminency of man above the creatures, he hath not only impressed from Gods finger in his first moulding, some Characters resembling God, in righteousness and holinesse, but is created with a capacity of receiving more of God, by communion with him. Other creatures have already all they will have, all they can have of conformity to him, but man is made *liker* then all, and is fitted and fashioned to aspire to more likeness and conformity, so that his soul may shine more and more to the perfect day.

There was an Union made already in his first moulding,

ding, and communion was to grow as a fragrant sweet fruit out of this blessed root; Union and multitude is the ground of fellowship and communion. That union was gracious that communion would have been glorious, for grace is the seed of glory. There was a twofold union between Adam and God, an *Union of state*, and an *Union of nature*: he was God, and he was Gods friend. All the creature had some likenesse to God, some engravings of his power and goodnesse, and wisdom, but man is said to be made according to Gods Image, *Let us make man in our image*. Other creatures had *similitudinem vestitus* but man had *similitudinem faciei*. Holinesse and righteousness is Gods face, the very excellency and center of all his Attributes, and the Lord stamps the image of these upon man. Other Attributes are but shadows upon his back parts, and he leaves the resemblance of his footsteps upon other creatures. What can be so beautiful as the Image of God upon the soul? Creatures, the nearer they are to God, the more pure and excellent. We see in this Fabrick of the World, the higher they are, the more pure and clear, the more beautiful. Now then what was man made? He was made a little lower then the Angels? In Hebrew, a little lower then God, *tantum non Deus*. In English man is set next to God, his glory and beauty mainly surpasses the glory of the Sun and Heaven. Things contiguous and next other, are like one another. The water is liker air then the earth, therefore next the air; the Air is liker Heaven then water, therefore it is next to it. *Omne contiguum spiritus est spirituale*. Angels and men next God, are next to him as he is a Spirit. Now similitude is the ground of friendship. *Pares paribus congregantur, similitudo necessitudinis vinculum*. It is that which concludes affection among men, so it is here by proportion. God sees that all is very good, and man the best of his works; and he loves him, and makes him his friend for his own Image which he beholds in him.

At length from these two roots this pleasant and fragrant fruit of Communion with, and enjoyment of God grows up. This is the intertainment of friends, and delight into one another, and to enjoy one another, *Amicorum omnia communia*, love makes all communion, it opens the treasure of Gods fulnesse, and makes a vent of divine bountie towards man, and it opens the heart of man, and makes it large as the sand the sea to receive of God. Our receiving of his fulnesse, is all the intertainment we can give him. O what blessednesse is this for a soul to live in him, and to live in him when it loves him, *anima est ubi amat, ubi animat*, and to taste of his sweetnesse and be satisfied with him, this makes perfect onenesse: and perfect onenesse with God, (who is the fountain of life, and in whose favour is life) is perfect blessednesse.

But we must stand a little here and consider our miserie, that have fallen from such an excellencie: how are we come down from heaven wonderfully? Sin was interposed between God and man, and this dissolves the union, and hinders the communion: An enemy is come between two friends and puts them at odds, and Oh, an eternal odds; sin hath sown this discord, and alienated our hearts from God. Mans glory consisted in the irradiation of the soul from Gods shining countenance, this made him light, Gods face shined on him. But sin interposing, has eclipsed that light, and brought on an eternal night of darknesse over the soul: And thus we are spoiled of the Image of God, as when the earth comes between the Sun and Moon. Now then, there can no beams of divine favour and love break through directly towards us, because of the cloud of our sins, that separates between God and us, and because of the partition wall of Ordinances, and the hand writing which was against us, Gods holy Law, and severe Justice, Col. 3. 14.

Then what shall we do? How shall we see his face

in joy? Certainly it had been altogether impossible if our Lord Jesus Christ had not come, who is the light and life of men, the Father shines on him, and the beams of his love reflects upon us, from the Son. The love of God, and his favourable countenance, cannot meet with us in a direct and immediate manner, they fall on us in this blessed compasse, by the intervention of a Mediator. We are rebels, standing at a distance with God, Christ comes between as Mediator, and Peace-maker, to reconcile us to God: *It is in Christ reconciling the world.* God first makes a union of Natures with Christ, and so he comes near to us, down to us, who could not come up to him, and then he sends out the Word of Reconciliation, the Gospel, the tenor whereof is this, *1 Joh. 1. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with the Father and his Son.* It is a voice of peace, and invitation to the fellowship of God: Behold then the happiness of man, the very end and purpose of the Gospel. Christ the repairer of the breaches, the second Adam aspires to quicken what Adam killed; He hath slain the enemy, and cancelled the hand-writing that was against us, and so made peace by the Blood of his Cross, and then having removed all that out of the way, comes and calls us unto the fellowship which we were ordained unto from our Creation. We were rebels, are called to be friends; *I call you not servants, but friends.* It was a wonder that the creature should be called a friend of God; but O greater wonder, that the rebel should be called a friend, and that is not all, we are called to nearer union, to Sons of God; this is our priviledge, *Joh. 1. 12.* This is a great part of our fellowship with the Father, and his Son, we are the Fathers children, and the Sons brethren, and if children, then heirs, and heirs of God, and if brethren, then co-heirs with Christ, *Rom. 8. 17.*

Thus the union is begun again in Christ, but as long

sin dwells in our mortal bodies, it is not perfect, there is alwayes some separation, and some enmity in our hearts, and so there is neither full seeing of God for we know but in part, and we see darkly) nor full enjoying of God; for we are saved by hope, and we live by faith, and not by sight. But this is begun which is the seed of eternal communion, we are here partakers of the Divine Nature. Now then it must aspire unto a more perfect union with God whose image it is: And therefore, the soul of a Believer is here still in motion towards God as his element. There is here an union in affection, but not communicated in fruition, *affectū non effectū*, the soul pants after God, *Whom have I in heaven or earth but thee*, my flesh and my heart faileth, a believing soul looks upon God as its only portion, accounts nothing misery but to be separated from him, and nothing blessednesse, but to be one with him, this is the loadstone of their affections, and desires, the Center which they move towards, and in which they will rest: It is true indeed, that oftentimes our hearts and our flesh faileth us, and we become ignorant and brutish, our affections cleaves to the earth, and tentations with their violence turn our souls towards another air then God, as there is nothing more easily moved and turned wrong, nor the needle that is touched with the Adamant, yet it settles not in such a posture, it recovers it self, and rests never till it look towards the North, and then it is fixed: even so tentations and the corruptions and infirmities of our hearts, disturb our spirits easily, and windes them about from the Lord, towards any other thing, but yet we are continuing with him, and he keeps us with his right hand, and therefore we may be moved, yet we shall not be greatly commoved, we may fall but we shall rise again, he is the strength of our heart, and therefore he will turn our heart about again, and fix it upon its own portion: Our union here consists more in his holding of us by his power, then our taking hold of him.

him by faith : power and good-will encamps both faith and the soul , we are kept by his power through faith, 1 Pet. 1. And thus he will guide our soul and still be drawing it nearer to him, from it and from sin, and from the world , till he receive us into glory, and till we be one as the Father and the Son. *He in us, and we in him , that we may be made perfect in one, as it is in the words read.*

This is strange , a greater unity and fuller enjoyment, a more perfect fellowship, then ever Adam in his innocency would have been capable of, what can we conceive it ? What tongue expresses it ? None can for its that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered in mans heart to conceive. We must suspend the knowledge of it till we have experience of it. Let us now believe it, and then we shall find it. This is a mutual inhabitation which is wonderful : Persons that dwell one with another, have much society and fellowship, but to dwell one in another is a strange thing, *I in them, and they in me* : and therefore it is often said to dwell in us , and we to dwell in him. But that which makes it of all most wonderful , and incomprehensible, is, that glorious Unity and Communion between the Father and the Son, which is made an Embleme of : *As thou Father art in me , and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.* Can ye conceive that unity of the Trinity ? Can you imagine that reciprocal inhabitation, that mutual Communion between the Father and the Son ? No, it hath not entered into the heart to conceive it : Only this much we know, that it is most perfect, it is most glorious and so much we may apprehend of this unity of Saints with God. O love is an uniting and transforming thing, *God is love , and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him* : He dwelleth in us by love, this makes him work in us, and shine upon us ; love hath drawn him down from his seat of Majesty, to visit poor Cottages of sinners, Isa. 66. 1. and 47. 15. And it is that love of God , reflected

on our souls, that carries the soul upward to him, live in him, and walk with him, O how doth it constrain a soul to live to him, and draw it from itself, 2 Cor. 5. 15. Then the more unity with God, the more separation from our selves, and the world; the nearer God, the farther from our selves, and the farther from our selves the more happy; And the more unity with God, the more unity among our selves, among the Brethren of our family: Because where we are not fully one with our Father, therefore there are many differences between us and Brethren, because we are not one perfectly in him, therefore we are not one as he and the Father is one. But when he shall be in us, and we in him, as the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, then shall we be one among our selves, then shall we meet in the unity of the faith, into a perfect man, into the measure, of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ, Eph. 4. 13. Christ is the uniting Principle: while the Saints are not wholly one, *unitertio*, they cannot be perfectly one *inter se* among themselves. Consider this, I beseech you, Christs union with the Father, is the foundation of our union to God, and our union among our selves, this is comfortable, the ground of it is laid already. Now it is not simply the unity of the Father and the Son in essence that is here meant, for what shadow and resemblance can be in the world of such an incomprehensible mysterie? But it is certainly the Union and Communion of God with Christ Jesus as Mediator, as the Head of the Church, which is his Body. Therefore seeing the Father is so wonderfully well pleased and one with Christ, his welbeloved Son and Messenger of the Covenant, and chief party contracting in our name, He is by vertue of this, one with us, who are his seed and members. And therefore the members should grow up in the Head Christ, from whom the whole body makes increase according to the effectual working of the spirit in it, Eph. 4. 15, 16. Now if the
union

union between the Father and Christ our Head cannot be dissolved, and cannot be barren and unfruitful; certainly the Spirit of the Father which is given to Christ beyond measure, must effectually work in every member, till it bring them to the unity of the Spirit and to the measure of the perfect man which is the fulnesse of Christ. So then every believing soul is one with the Father as Christ is one, because he is the Head, and they his members, and the day is coming, that all the members shall be perfectly united to the Head Christ, and grow up to the perfect stature which is the stature of Christs fulnesse, and then shall we all be made perfect in one, we shall be one as he is one, because he and we are one perfect man, Head and members.

Now to what purpose is all this spoken? I fear it doth not stir up in our souls a desire after such a blessed life: Whose heart would not be moved at the sound of such words? Our fellowship is with the Father and his Son, we are made perfect, he in us and we in him: Certainly that soul is void of the life of God, that doth not find some sparkle of heavenly ambition kindled within, after such a glorious and blessed condition. But these things savour not, and taste not to the most part, the natural man knows them not, for they are spiritually discerned: How lamentable is it, that Christ is come to restore us to our lost blessednesse, and yet no man almost considers it, or laies it to heart: O how miserable, how miserable is that soul, that doth not draw near to God in Christ, when God hath come so near to us in Christ, that goes a-whooring after the lust of the eyes, and flesh, and after the imaginations of the own heart, and will not be guided by Christ the way of life, to glory, *Thou shalt destroy them, O Lord, Psal. 73. 27.* All men are far off from God, and from the womb; Behold we may have access to God in Christ, woe to them that are yet far off, and will not draw near, *they shall all perish.* I exhort you.

you to consider what you are doing, the most part of you are going away from God, you were born for off, and you will yet go further; know what you will meet with in that way, destruction.

You have never yet asked in earnest for what purpose you came in the world? What wonder ye wander and walk at randome, seeing ye have not proposed to your selves any certain scope and aim? It is great follie, you would not be so foolish in any little businesse, but O how foolish men are in the main businesse. *The light of the body is the eye, if that be not light, the whole body is full of darknesse.* If your intention be once right established, all your course will be orderly, but if you be dark and blind in this point, and have not considered it, you cannot walk in the light, your whole way is darknesse: The right consideration of this great end, would shine unto you, and direct your way, but while you have not proposed this end unto your selves, the enjoyment of God, you must spend your time, either in doing nothing to that purpose, or doing contrary to it. All your other lawful businesse, your callings, and occupations, are but in the by, they are not the end, nor the way, but you make them only your businesse, they are altogether impertinent to this end: and the rest of your walking in lusts and ignorance, is not only impertinent, but inconsistent with it, and contrare to it. If you think that you have this before your eyes, to enjoy God, I pray you look upon the way you choose. Is your drunkennesse, your swearing, your uncleannesse, your contentions and railings, and such works of the flesh, are those the way to enjoy God? Shall not these separate between God and you? Is your eating, and drinking, and sleeping as beasts, and labouring in your Callings, are these all the means you use to enjoy God? Be not deceived, you who draw not near God by Prayer often in secret, and by faith in his Son Christ, as lost miserable sinners to be saved,

saved, and reconciled by him, you have no fellowship with him, and you shall not enjoy him hereafter. You whose hearts are given to your unchastity, who have many lovers and idols beside him, you cannot say, Whom have I beside thee on the earth? No, you have many other things beside God. You can have nothing of God, unless ye make him all to you, unless you have him alone. *My undefiled is one, Cant. 6. 9.* he must be alone, his glory he will not give to another: If you divide your affections, and pretend to give him part, and your lusts other part, you may be doing, but he will not divide his glory so, he will give none of it to any other thing. But as for those souls that come to him, and see their misery without him, they know how good it is! It is not only good, but best, not only good, it is *bonum*, and it is *optimum*, yea, *unicum*, there is none good, save one, even God, and there is nothing good for us, but this one, to be near God, and so near, that we may be one, in spirit with the Lord, for he that is joyned to the Lord is one spirit: Rejoyce in your portion, long for the possession of it. Let all your meditations, and affections and conversation, proclaim *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and none in the earth beside thee.* And certainly he shall guide you to the end, and receive you into glory, then you shall be free from your labours, because you shall dwell in him, and enjoy that which ye longed and laboured for. Let the consideration of our end, unite the hearts of Christians here. O what an absurd thing is it, that those who shall lodge together at night and be made perfect in one, should not only go contrary ways, but have contrary mindes and affections.



Of the Scriptures.

2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scriptures is given, &c.*

WE told you, that, there was nothing more necessary to know, then what our End is, and what the way is that leads to that End: we see the most part of men walking at random, running an uncertain race, because they do not propose unto themselves a certain scope to aim at, and whether to direct their whole course. According to mens particular Inclinations and humors, so do the purposes and designs of men vary, and often do the purposes of one man change, according to the circumstances of time, and his condition in the world. We see all men almost running crosse one to another; one, drives at the satisfaction of his lust, by pleasure; another, fancies a great felicity in honour; a third, in getting riches, and thus men divide themselves, whereas, If it were true happinesse that all were seeking, they would all go one way towards one End. If men be not in the right way, the faster they seem to move toward their mark, the further they go from it; wandering from the right way, (suppose men intend well) will put them further from that which they intend. *Si via in contrarium ducat, ipsa velocitas majoris Intervalli causa est*: Therefore it concerns us all most deeply, to be acquainted with the true path of Blessednesse; For, if we once mistake, the more we do, the swifter we move, the more distant we are from it indeed. And there is the more need, because, there are so many by-paths that lead to destruction: what say I, By-paths?

24 *Most men mistake the right Way.*

paths? No, high wayes, beaten paths, that the multitude of men walk in, and never challenge, nor endure to be challenged, as if they were in an error. In other journeys, men keep the high plain way, and are afraid of any secret By-way, lest it lead them wrong: *At hic via quæque tritissima, maxime decipit.* Here the high pathed way leads wrong, and, O how wrong! to Hell. This is the meaning of Christs Sermon, *Enter in at the strait gate,* but walk not in the broad way where many walk, for it leads to destruction; Therefore, I would have this perswasion of begotten in your souls, That the course of the world, the way of the most part of men, is dangerous, and damnable. O consider, whether the way will lead you before, you go further. Do not think it a folly to stand still now, and Examine it, when ye have gone on so long in their company. Stand, I say, and consider, Be not ignorant as beasts, that know no other thing then to follow the drove, *quæ pergunt, non quæ eundem est, sed qua itur,* they follow not whether they ought to go, but whether most go: you men, and have reasonable souls within you, therefore I beseech you be not composed, and fashioned according to custome, and Example, that is Brutish, but according to some inward knowledge and reason: Retire once from the multitude, and ask in earnest of God, What is the way? Him that fears him, he will teach the way that he should choose: The way to this Blessed End is very strait, very difficult, you must have a guid in it, you must have a lamp and a light to it, else you cannot but go wrong.

The principles of Reason within us, are too dark and dim, they will never lead us through the pits and snares in the way: These indeed shined brightly in Adam, that he needed no light without him, no voice about him; But sin hath extinguished it much, and there remains nothing but some little spunk or spark under the ashes of much corruption, that is but insufficient in it self, and is often more blinded and darkened.

The Authority of the Scriptures divine. 25
darkned by lusts : so that if it were never so much
refined, as it was in many Heathens, yet it is but
the blind leading the blind, and both must fall into
the ditch. Our end is high and divine, *To glorifie God,*
and to enjoy Him, therefore our reason *caligat ad su-*
prema, It can no more stedfastly behold that glorious
end, and move towards it, then our weak eyes can
behold the Sun: Our eye can look downward upon
the earth, but not upward to the heavens. So we
have some remnant of reason in us that hath some
petty and poor ability for matters of little moment,
as the things of this life: but if once we look upward
to the glory of God, or eternal happinesse, our eyes
are dazled, our reason confounded, we cannot stedfast-
ly behold that, *Eph. 4. 18. 2 Cor. 3. 13, 14.*

Therefore the Lord hath been pleased to give us
the Scriptures, which may be a *Lamp unto our feet,*
and a guide unto our way, whereunto we shall do well to
take heed, as unto a candle or a light that shines in a dark
place, till the day dawn, 2 Pet. 1. 19. These are able
to make us wise unto salvation. Let us hear what Paul
speaks to Timothy, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *All Scriptures is gi-*
ven, &c. where you have two points of high concern-
ment, The Authoritie of the Scriptures, and their
Utilitie. Their Authoritie, for they are given by
Divine Inspiration, their Utilitie, for they are pro-
fitable for Doctrine, &c. and can make us perfect, and
well furnished to every good work.

The Authoritie of it is in a peculiar way divine, of
him, and through him are all things: all writings of men
according to the Truth of the Scriptures, have
some Divinitie in them, in as much as they have of
Truth, which is a Divine thing: Yet the Holy Scrip-
tures are by way of excellencie attributed to God,
for they are immediatlie inspired of God: Therefore
Peter saith, that the Scripture come not in old time by
the will of man, but holy men spake as they were moved
by the holy Ghost, 2 Pet, 1. 21. God by his Spirit as it
were, acts the part of the soul, in the Prophets and
D Apostles;

26 *The Scriptures are the Word of God.*
Apostles; and they did no more but uttered what
the Spirit conceived: The holy Ghost inspires the
matter and the words, and they were but tongues
and pens to speak and write unto the people.
there needed no debate, no search in their own minds
for the truth, no inquisition for light, but light shined
upon their souls so brightly, so convincingly, that
put it beyond all question, that it was the mind and
voice of God. You need not ask how they did know
that their dreams or visions were indeed from the
Lord? And that they did not frame any imagination
in their own hearts, and taught it for his Word, as
many did? I say, you need no more ask that, than
ask how shall a man see light, or know the Sun shines
light makes it self manifest, and all other things, are
seen by its own brightnesse; even so the holy men of
God, needed not any mark or sign to know the Spirit's
voice, his revelation needed not the light of any
other thing, it was light it self, it would certainly
over-power the soul and mind, and leave no place
doubting: God who cannot be deceived, and cannot
deceive no man, hath delivered us this Doctrine.
with what reverence should we receive it, as if we
heard the Lord from heaven speak. If you ask how
you shall be perswaded that the Scriptures are the
Word of God, his very mind opened to men and made
legible? Truly there are somethings cannot be well
proven, not because they are doubtful, but because
they are clear of themselves, and beyond all doubt
and exception. Principles of Arts must not be proved
but supposed, till you find by trial and experience af-
terward that they were indeed real true. There is
no question such characters of Divinitie, and Majesty
imprinted in the very Scriptures themselves, that
whosoever hath the eyes of his understanding opened
though he run he may read them, and find God in
them. What Majestic is in the very simplicitie and
plainnesse of the Scriptures? They do not labour to
please mens ears, and adorn the matter, with the cu-
rious

various garments of words, and phrases, but represents the very matter it self to the soul, as that which in it self is worthy of all acceptation, and needs no humane eloquence to commend it. Painting doth spoil native beauty, external ornaments would disfigure somethings, that are of themselves proportioned and lovely, therefore the Lord chooses a plain and simple stile, which is foolishnesse to the world, but in these swaddling cloaths of the Scriptures, and this poor Cottage the Childe Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth is contained. There is a Jewel of the mysterious wisdom of God, and mans eternal blessednesse in this Mineral: What glorious and astonishing humility is here? What humble and homely Glory and Majesty also? He is most high, and yet none so lowly. What excellent consent and harmonie of many writers, in such distant times, wonder at it? All speak one thing, to one purpose, to bring men to God, to abase all glory, and exalt him alone. Must it not be one Spirit that hath quickned all these, and breaths in them all this one heavenly Song, of *Glory to God on high, and good will towards men*. Other Writers will reason things with you, to convince you, and perswade you, and many thinks them more profound and deep for that reason, and do despise the basenesse of the Scriptures. But to them whose eyes are opened, the Majestie and Authoritie of God commanding, and asserting, and testifying, to them is more convincing, from its own bare assertion, nor all humane reason.

Although there be much light in the Scriptures to guide mens way to Gods glory and their own happiness, yet certainly it will all be to small purpose if the eyes of our understanding be darkned and blinded. If you shall surround a man with day light, except he open his eyes he cannot see, the Scriptures are a clear Sun of life, and righteousness; but the blind soul compassed with that light is nothing the wiser; but thinks the lamp of the word shines not because it sees

not, it hath its own dungeon within it, therefore the spirit of God must open the eyes of the blind, and enlighten the eyes of the understanding, that a soul may see wonderful things in Gods Law, *Psal. 119. 5, Job. 1. 5.* The light may shine in the darknesse, but the darknesse cannot comprehend it. I wonder that the most part of men can see no beautie, no Majesty, no Excellencie, in the holy Scriptures to all of them, because they are natural and have not the spirit of God, and so cannot know these things, for they are spiritually discerned, *2 Cor. 2. 14, &c.* Therefore the inspiration of God did conceive this writing first, and preached this Doctrine into the world, so that there can no soul understand it, or profite by it, but by the inspiration of the Almighty, *Verily there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding, saith Job.* When the Spirit comes into the soul to engrave the Characters of that Law and Truth into the heart, which were once engraven on Tables of Stone, and not written with pen and ink, then the spirit of Christ Jesus writes over and transcribes the Doctrine of the Gospel, on fleshly tables of the heart, draws the lineaments of that faith and love preached in the word upon the soul, then the soul is the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink and pen, but with the spirit of the living God, *2 Cor. 3. 3.* And then the soul is manifestly declared to be such, when that which is impressed on the heart, is expressed in the outward man in walking, that it may be read of all men. Now the soul having thus received the Image of the Scriptures on it, understands the spirit's voice in them, and sees the truth and divinity of them, the eye must receive some species and likenesse of the object before it see it, it must be made like to the object ere it can behold it, *intelligens in actu fit ipsum intelligibile*, so the soul must have some inspiration of the holy Ghost, before it can believe with the heart the inspired Scriptures.

Now for the utility and profite of the Scriptures, who

who can speak of it, according to its worth? Some-
things may be over-commended, nay all things, but
this one God speaking in his word to mankind. Ma-
ny titles are given to humane writings, some are cal-
led accurate, some subtile, some ingenious and quick,
some profound and deep, some plain, some learned :
But call them what they please, the Scriptures may
vendicate to it self these two Titles as its own pre-
rogative, *Holy* and *Profitable* ; the best speaker in the
world in many words cannot want sin, the best writer
hath some drosse and refuse : but here all is holy, all
is profitable : Many books are to no purpose but to
feed and inflame mens lusts, many serve for nothing
but to spend and drive over his time, without thought,
most part are good for nothing, but to burden and
over-weary the world, to put them in a fancie of
knowledge which they have not, many serve for this
only to nourish mens curiosity, and vain imaginati-
ons and contentions about words and notions, but
here is a Book *profitable, all profitable*, if you do not
yet profite by it, you can have no pleasure in it, its on-
ly ordained for souls profiting, not for pleasing your
fancie, not for matter of curious speculation, not for
contention and strife, about the interpretation of it.
Many books have nothing in them, but specious titles
to commend them, they do nothing lesse then what
they promise, they have a large and fair entry which
leads only into a poor cottage, but the Scriptures
hath not hyperbolick and superlative stiles to allure
men, they hold out a plain and common gate, and en-
try which will undoubtedly lead to a pleasant Pal-
lace : others *& prodesse volunt & delectare*, but these
certainly, *& prodesse volunt & possunt*, they both can
profite you and will profite you, I wish that souls
would read the Scriptures as profitable Scriptures,
with intention to profite, if you do not read with
such a purpose, you read not the Scriptures of God,
they become as another book unto you. But what
are they profitable for? for *Doctrin*e, and a Divine

Doctrines. A Doctrine of life and happinesse, its the great promise of the new Covenant, *you shall be taught of God*, the Scriptures can make a man learn and wise, learned to salvation. It is foolishnesse to the world, *but the world through wisdom know not God*. Alas, what do they then know? Is there any besides God? And is there any knowledge besides the knowledge of God? You have a poor petty wisdom among you, gather riches and manage your businesse, others have a poor imaginarie wisdom, that they call learning, and generally people thinks to pray to God is but paper-skill, a little book-craft, they think the knowledge of God is nothing else but to learn to read the Bible. Alas, mistake not, it is another thing to know God, the doctrine of Jesus Christ written on the heart is a deep profound learning, and the poor simple and rudest people may by the spirits teaching become wiser then their Ancients, then their Ministers: it is an excellent point of learning to know how to be saved, what is it I pray you to know the courses of the heavens? To number the Orbs and the Stars, to measure them? To measure their circumference, to reckon their motions, & yet not to know him that sits on the circle of them, and not to know how to inhabite and dwell there? If you would seek into God, and seek eyes opened to behold the mystery of the word, you would become wiser then your Pastors, you would learn from the spirit to pray better, you would find the way to heaven better then they can teach you, or walk in.

Then its profitable for reproof and correction: It contains no Doctrine very pleasant to mens natural humours, it is indeed most pleasant, but to a right and ordered taste. You know the distemper of the eye, or the perverting of the taste, will misrepresent pleasant things, and sweet things to these senses and make them ill savoured and bitter: But I say to a discerning spirit there is nothing so sweet, so comely. *I have seen an end of all perfection, but none of thy Law: thy word is sweeter to me then the honey, or the honey com*

If a soul be prepossessed with the love of the world, and lusts of the world, it cannot savour and taste to them, that vicious quality in the mind, will make the pleasant Gospel unpleasant: *I piped unto you, and you have not danced.* But however the Scriptures are then most profitable, when they are least pleasant to our corruptions; and therefore it is an absolute and intire Peece, *Et prodesse volunt & delectare, Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.* There are sharp reproofs and sad corrections of his holy Law, which must make way for the pleasant and sweet Gospel: There is a reproof of life, a wounding before healing, that *whoso refuseth them, despiseth their own soul, but the ear that heareth them abideth among the wise,* Prov. 15. 31. Wo unto that soul that correction or reproof or threatening is grievous unto, *he shall die*, ver. 10. *he is brutish*, 12. 1. There is a generation of men that can endure to hear nothing but Gospel-promises, that cry out against all reproving of sins, and Preaching of Gods wrath against unbelieving sinners, as legal, and meddling with other mens matters, especially, if they reprove the sins of Rulers, their publick State-enormities, they think it grievous to them: As if the whole Word of God were not profitable; as if reproofs were not as wholesome as consolations; as if threatenings did not contribute to make men flee from the wrath to come, into a city of refuge. Let such persons read their own characters out of wise Solomon, *Correction is grievous to them that forsake the way. Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee, and he will be yet wiser,* Prov. 9. 9. If we were pleasers of men, then were we not the servants of Jesus Christ, let us strive to profite men, but not to please them: Peace, peace, which mens own hearts fancies, would please them, but it were better for them to be awakened out of that dream, by reproof, by correction, and he that will do so, shall find more favour of him afterward, then he that flattered him with his tongue, Prov. 28. 23. Well then, let this be established in your hearts

hearts as the foundation of all true Religion, that the
 Scriptures are the Word of the eternal God, and that
 they contain a perfect and exact rule, both of glor-
 ifying God, and of the way to enjoy him, they can
 make you perfect to every good work. I shall say no
 more on this, but beseech you, as ye love your own
 souls, be acquainting your selves with them. You
 will hear in these dayes of men pretending to more
 divine and spiritual discoveries and revelations than
 the Scriptures contain: but, my brethren, these can
 make you wise to salvation, these can make you per-
 fect to every good work, then what needs more? All
 that is beside salvation and beyond perfection account
 it superfluous and vain, if not worse, if not diabolical.
 Let others be wise to their own destruction, let them
 establish their own imaginations for the Word of
 God, and rule of their faith, but hold you fast what
 you have received, and contend earnestly for it, add
 nothing, and diminish nothing, let this Lamp shine
 till the day dawn, till the morning of the resurrecti-
 on, and walk ye in the light of it, and do not kindle
 any other sparkles, else ye shall ly down in the grave
 in sorrow, and rise in sorrow: Take the Word of
 God as the only rule, and the perfect rule, a rule for
 all your actions, Civil, Natural, and Religious, for all
 must be done to his glory, and his Word teacheth how
 to attain that end. Let not your own imaginations,
 let not others example, let not the Preaching of men,
 let not the Conclusions and Acts of Assemblies, be
 your rule, but in as far as ye find them agreeing with
 this perfect rule of Gods holy Word: all other rules
 are *regulae regulatae*, they are but like publications and
 intimations of the rule it self. Ordinances of Assem-
 blies are but like the Heralds promulgation of the
 Kings Statute and Law, if it vary in any thing from
 his intention, its not valide and binding. I beseech
 you take the Scriptures for the rule of your walking,
 or else you will wander, the Scripture is *regula regu-
 lans*, a ruling rule. If you be not acquaint with it,

you

you must follow the opinions or examples of other men, and what if they lead you unto destruction.

Joh. 5. 39. Search the Scriptures for in them, &c. - Eph. 2. 20. And are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles.

AS in darknesse, there is need of a lanthorn without, and the light of the eyes within, for neither can we see in darknesse without some lamp, though we have never so good eyes, nor yet see without eyes, though in never so clear a Sun-shine: So there is absolute need, for the guiding of our feet in the dangerous and dark paths to eternal life (that is full of pits and snares) of the Lamp or Word written or preached without us, and the illumination of the holy Ghost within us. These are conjoyned, *Isai. 59. 21. This is my Covenant, the Spirit that is upon thee, and the words that I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor the mouth of thy seed, &c.* There are words without, and there must needs be a Spirit within, which makes us to behold the truth and grace contained in these words. There is a Law written without, with pen and ink, and there is a Law written within, upon the heart, with the Spirit of the living God, the Law without is the Pattern and exact Coppy, the Law within, is the Transcript or the Image of God upon the heart, framed and fashioned according to the similitude of it, *2 Cor. 3. 3. Heb. 8. 10.* So then there needs be no more question about the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, among these who have their senses exercised to discern between good and ill, then among men who see, and taste, concerning light, and darknesse, sweet and bitter. The perswasion of a Christian is fetched deeper then the reasons of men, their faith is the evidence of things not seen, its an eye, a supernatural

supernatural eye, whereby a soul beholds the Majesty and excellency of God shining in the word, which though it shine about the rest of the world, yet it is not seen because they cannot know it, nor discern it. Wonder not that the multitude of men cannot believe the report that is made, that there are so few who find any such excellency and sweetnesse in the Gospel, it is reported, because saith *Isai. 53. 1.* The arm of this Lord is not revealed to them, the hand of God must first write on their heart, ere they understand the writings of the Scriptures, his arm must create an eye in their souls, an eternal light, before it can behold that glorious highnesse of God shining in the word. The word is Gods testimony of himself, of his grace, and mercy and good will to mankind: No man can receive this testimonie, unlesse it be sealed and confirmed by the holy Ghost into the heart, saith *Peter, we are his witnesses of these things, and so also is the holy Ghost whom God hath given to those that obey him, Acts 5. 32.* The word witnesses to the ear, and the spirit testifieth to our spirits the truth and worth of that, and therefore the spirit is a seal and a witness. The word is the Lords voice to his own children, but the stards cannot know it, but *my sheep hear my voice, John 10. 4, 16.* You know no difference between the bleating of one sheep and another, but the poor lambs know their mothers voice, there is a secret instinct in nature, that is more powerful then many marks, and signs, even these who are begotten of God know his voice, they discern that in it, which all the world that hear it cannot discern, there is a sympathie between their souls and that living Word, that word is the immortal seed they are begotten of, and therefore a natural instinct to love that, and to meditate in it, such an inclination to it as in new born babes to the breasts, so the children of God do desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, as they were born of it, *1 Pet. 2. 2.* In these Scriptures which I read in your audience, you have something of the excellency

excellency, and our duty, there is a rich Jewel in them, which precious Pearl in that field, even Jesus Christ, and in him eternal life, and therefore we ought to search the Scriptures for this Jewel, to dig the field for this Pearl, the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles, for it is a sure foundation whereupon souls may build their eternal felicity, and the hope of it: Jesus Christ is the very chief Stone in that foundation, whereupon the weight of all the Saints and all their hopes hang. And therefore we ought to lean the weight of our souls only to this truth of God, and build our faith only upon it: and square our practise only by it.

We shall speak something of the first, that it may be a square to the second. The Jews had some respect to the opinion of the word of God, they knew that in them was eternal life, they thought it a Doctrine of life and happinesse, and so cried up *Moses* writings, but they would not believe Christs words, they erred not, understanding the Scriptures, and so set the writings of *Moses* Law at variance with the preaching of Christs Gospel: What a pitiful mistake was this? they thought they had eternal life in the Scriptures, and yet they did not receive nor acknowledge him, whom to know was eternal life, therefore our Lord Jesus sends them back again to the Scriptures, go and search them; you think, and you think well, that in them you may finde the way to eternal life, but while you seek it in them, you misse it; these Scriptures tell of me the end of the Law, but you cannot behold the end of that Ministry, because of the blindness of your hearts, *Rom. 10. 3* *2 Cor. 3. 13, 14*. Therefore search again, understand the ceremonies, I am wrapt in them, and life eternal with me, dig up the Law till you finde the bottom of Gods purpose in it, till you find the end of the ministration, and you shall find me the way of truth, and life, and so you shall have that eternal life which now you do but think you have, and are

36 *Life in the Scriptures, and how ?*

are beguiled. While you seek it out of me, in vain you think you have it, for it is not in the Scriptures, but because they testify of me the life and the life of men. May not this now commend the word to us, eternal life is in it. Other writings and discourses may tickle the ears with some pleasing eloquence, but that is vanishing, its but like a Musicians voice, some may represent some petty and momentary advantage, but how soon shall an end be put to all that so that within a little time the advantage of all the books of the world shall be gone. The statutes and lawes of Kings and Parliaments can reach no further than some temporal reward or punishment, the highest pain is the killing of this body, their highest reward is some evanishing and fading honour or enriching riches: but he sheweth his word and judgments to us, and hath not dealt so with every nation. *Psal. 147. 19, 20* And no nation under the whole heaven hath such Laws and Ordinances, eternal life and eternal death is wrapt up in them, these are rewards and punishments suitable to the Majesty and Magnificence of the eternal Law-giver. Consider beseech you, what is folded up here, the Scripture shews the path of life; life is of all beings most excellent, and comes nearest the blessed being of God. When we say life, we understand a blessed life, that only deserves the name. Now this we have lost since *Adam*, death is past upon all men, but that death is not the worst, its but a consequent of a soul-departed the immortall soul whose life consisted in Communion with God, and peace with him, is separated from him by sin, and so killed, when it is cut off from the fountain of life, what life can it have any more, like a Beam that is cut off by the intervention of a body from the Sun. Now then, what a blessed Doctrine must it be that brings to light life and immortality, especially when we have so miserably lost and involved our souls into an eternal death? life precious in it self, but much more precious to

This present life compared with Eternity. 37

condemned to die, to be caught out of the paws of the Lion, to be brought back from the Gibbet. O how will that commend the favour of a little more time in the world. But then if we knew what an eternal misery we are involved into, and stand under a sentence binding us over to such an inconceivable and insupportable punishment as is the curse and wrath of God; O how precious an esteem would souls have of the Scriptures, how would they be sweet to their soul, because they shew unto us a way of escaping that pit of misery, and a way of attaining eternal blessedness, as satisfying and glorious, as the misery would have been vexing and tormenting. O that ye would once lay these in the ballance together, this present life, and eternal life. Know ye not that your souls are created for eternity, that they will eternally survive all those present things. Now, how do ye imagine they shall live after this life, your thoughts, and projects, and designs are confined within the poor narrow bounds of your time; when you die, in that day your thoughts perish, all your imaginations and purposes, and providences have an end then, they reached no further then that time, and if you would wholly perish too, it were not so much matter, but for all your purposes & projects to come to an end, when you are but beginning to live, and enter eternity, that is lamentable indeed. Therefore I say, consider what ye are doing, weigh these in a ballance, eternal life and the present life; if there were no more difference, but the continuance of the one, and shortness of the other, that this worlds standing is but as one day, one moment to eternity, that ought to preponderate in your souls; do we not here flee away as a shadow upon the mountains, are we not as a vapour that ascends, and for a little time appears a solid body, and then presently evanisheth; do we not come all into the stage of the world, as for an hour to act our part and be gone: now then, what is this to endless eternity?

38 *This present life compared with Eternity.*
When you have continued as long as since the world began, you are no nearer the end of it, ought not that estate then to be most in your eyes, how to lay up a foundation for the time to come. But then compare the misery and vexation of this life, with the glory and felicity of this eternal life, what are our dayes but few and full of trouble? Or if you will take the most blessed estate you have seen or heard of in this world, of Kings and rich men, and help all the defects of it by your imaginations: suppose unto your selves the height and pitch of Glory and abundance, and power that is attainable on earth and when your fancy hath busked up such a felicity compare it with eternal life: O how will that evanish out of your imaginations, if so be you know any thing of the life to come, you will even think that an odious comparison, you will think all the earthly felicity but light as vanity; *Every man at his best estate is altogether vanity.* Eternal life will weight down eternally, 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. O but it hath an exceeding weight in it self, one moment of it, or hours possession and taste of it; but then, what shall the endlesse endurance of it add to its weight? Now there are many that presume they have a right to eternal life, as the Jews did, you think, saith he, that you have it, you think well, that you think it is only to be found in the Scriptures, but you vainly think that you have found it in them: And there is the reason of it, *because you will not come to me that you may have life*, vers. 40. If you did understand the true meaning of the Scriptures, and did not rest on the outward Letter and Ordinances, you would receive the testimony that the Scriptures give of me. But now you hear not me the Fathers substance of the Word; *Therefore you have not his Word abiding in you*, vers. 38. There was nothing more general among that people, nor a vain carnal confidence and presumption of being Gods people, and having interest in the promise of eternal life, as it is this day in the visible Church.

No present life compared with Eternity. 39

Church. There is a multitude that are Christians only in the Letter, and not in the Spirit, that would never admit any question concerning this great matter of having eternal life, and so by not questioning it, they come to think they have it, and by degrees their conjectures and thoughts about this ariseth to the stability of some fained and strong perswasion of it. In the Old Testament the Lord strikes at the roots of their perswasions, by discovering unto them how vain a thing it was, and how abominable before him, to have an external profession of being his people, and to glory in external Ordinances and Priviledges, and yet to neglect altogether the purging of their hearts and consciences from lusts and Idol sins, and to make no conscience of walking righteously towards men. Their profession was contradicted by their practice, *Will ye steal, murther, and commit adultery, and yet come and stand in my house, Jer. 7, 8, 9.* Doth not that say as much as if I had given you liberty to do all these abominations? Even so it is this day, the most part have no more of Christianity but a name, they have some outward priviledges of Baptism, and hearing the word, and it may be, hath a form of knowledge, and a form of worship, but in the meantime they are not baptized in heart, they are in all their conversation even conformed to the Heathen-world, they hate personal reformation, and thinks it too precise and needlesse: Now I say, such are many of you, and yet you would not take it well to have it questioned, whether ye shall be partakers of eternal life? You think you are wronged when that is called in question. Oh that it were beyond all question indeed. But know assuredly that you are but Christians in the Letter, in the Flesh, and not in the Spirit; many of you have not so much as a form of knowledge, have not so much as the Letter of Religion: you have heard some names in the Preaching often repeated, as *Christ*, and *God*, and *Faith*, and *Heaven*, and *Hell*, and you know no more

40 *No salvation without coming to Christ.*
of these but the Name, you consider not and meditate not on them: and these who know the truth of the word, yet the Word abideth not nor dwelleth in you, you have it in your mouth, you have it in your mind or understanding, but it is not received in love, it doth not dwell in the heart, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*, Col. 3. 16. you have it imprisoned in your minds, and shut up into a corner where it is uselesse, and can do no more but witnesse against you, and scarce that; as the Gentiles incarcerated and detained the truth of God written by nature within them, in unrighteousnesse, Rom. 1. 18. so do many of you detain the knowledge of his Word in unrighteousnesse, it hath no place in the heart, gets no liberty and freedom to walk through the affections, and so to order the conversation of men: and therefore the most part of men do but fancie to themselves an interest and right to eternal life, you think it, and do but think it, it is but a strong imagination, that hath no strength from the grounds of it, no stability from any evidence or promise, but meerly from it self, or it is but a light and vain conjecture that hath no strength in it, because there is no question or doubts admitted which may try the strength of it: But then I suppose that a man could attain some answerable walking, that he had not only a form of knowledge, but some reality of practice, some inward heat of affection and zeal for God and godlinesse, yet there is one thing that wants, and if it be wanting, will spoil all: and it is this which Christ reproveth in the Jews, *You will not come to me to have life*, the Scriptures testifie of me, but you receive not their testimony. Suppose a man had as much equity and justice towards men, piety towards God, and sobriety towards himself, as can be found amongst the best men, let him be a diligent reader of the Scriptures, let him love them, and meditate on them day and night, yet if he do not come out of himself, and leave

No salvation without coming to Christ. 41

leave all his own righteousness as dung behind him, that he may be found in Jesus Christ, he hath no life; he cannot have any right to life eternal. You may think this a strange assertion, that if a man had the righteousness and holiness of an angel, yet he could not be saved without denying all that, and fleeing to Christ as an ungodly man: And you may think it as strange a supposal, that any person that readeth the Scriptures, and walketh righteously, & hath a zeal towards God, yet are such as will not come to Christ, and will not hear him whom the Father hath sent.

But the first is the very substance of the Gospel, *There is no other Name by which men may be saved, but by Jesus Christ*, Act. 4. 12. Life eternal is all within him, *All the treasures of grace, and wisdom, and knowledge, are seated in him*, Col. 1. 19. and 2, 3. All the light of life and salvation is embodied in this Sun of Righteousness, since the eclipse of mans felicity in the Garden. *Adam* was a living soul, but he lost his own life, and killed his posterity. Christ Jesus the second comman Man in the World is a quickning Spirit, he hath not only life in himself, but he gives it more abundantly: And therefore you have it so often repeated in *John*, who was the Disciple most acquainted with Christ, *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*, 1. 4. *And he is the bread of life that gives life to the world*, Joh. 6. 33. and 35. *He is the resurrection and the life*, 11. 25. and *the way, the truth and life*, 14. 6. The Scriptures do not contain eternal life, but in as far as they lead to him who is life, and whom to know and embrace is eternal life: And therefore (saith he) *these are they which testify of me*. Man lived immediatly in God when he was in innocency, he had life in himself from God, but then he began to live in himself, without dependence on God the Fountain of life, and this himself being interposed between God and his life, it evanished, even as a Beam by the interveening of any grosse body between it and the Sun. Now mans light and life be-

42 *Christ is folded up in the Scriptures*
ing thus eclipsed and cut off, the Lord is pleased to
let all fulnesse dwell in his Son Jesus Christ, and the
fulnesse of the Godhead dwell in him bodily, Col. 2.9
that since there was no accessse immediatly to God for
life (a flaming fire and sword of Divine Justice com-
passing and guarding the Tree of Life, lest man should
touch it) there might be accessse to God in a Mediator
like unto us, that we might come to him, and might
have life from God by the intervention of Jesus Christ.

Look then what is in the Holy Scriptures, and you
shall find it but a letter of death and ministration of
condemnation while it is separated from him, Christ
is the very life and Spirit of the Scriptures, by whose
vertue they quicken our souls; if you consider the
perfect rule of righteousness in the Law, you can
not find life there, because you cannot be conformed
unto it, the holiest man offends in every thing, and
that holy Law being violated in any thing, will send
thee to hell with a curse; *Cursed is he that abides in
every thing.* If you look upon the promise of
life, *Do this and live*, what comfort can you find
in it, except you could find *doing* in your selves? Can
any man living find such exact obedience as the
Law requires? There is a mistake among many, they
conceive that the Lord cannot but be well pleased
with them, if they do what they can, but be not
deceived, the Law of God requires perfect doing, it
will not compound with thee, and come down to
its terms, not one jot of the rigour of it will be re-
mitted: if you cannot do all that is commanded, all
you do will not satisfie that promise, therefore thou
must be turned over from the promise of life to the
curse, and there thou shalt find thy name written.
Therefore it is absolutely necessary that Jesus Christ
be made under the Law, and give obedience in all
things even to the death of the crosse, and for us
made a curse for us, and sin for us, even he who knew
no sin, and thus in him you find the Law fulfilled,
Justice satisfied, and God pleased, in him you find

the promise of life indeed established, in a better and surer way then was first propounded, you find life by his death, you find life in his doing for you: And again consider the Ceremonial Law, what were all these sacrifices and ceremonies? did God delight in them? could he savour their incense and sweet smells, and eat the fat of Lambs and be pacified? No, he detastes and abhors such imaginations, because that people did stay in the letter, and went no further then the Ceremonie, he declares that it was as great abomination to him, as the offering up of a Dog, while they were separated from Jesus Christ in whom his soul rested, and was pacified, they were not expiations, but provocations, they were not propitiations for sins, but abominations in themselves. But take these as the shadows of such a living substance, take them as remembrances of him who was to come, and behold Jesus Christ lying in these Swadling-cloaths of Ceremonies, untill the fulnesse of time should come that he might be manifested in the flesh, and so you shall find eternal life in those dead beasts, in these dumb Ceremonies; if you consider this Lamb of God slain in all these sacrifices from the beginning of the world, then you present a sweet smelling savour to God, then you offer the true propitiation for the sins of the world, then he will delight more in that Sacrifice then all other personal obedience.

But what if I should say that the Gospel it self is a killing-letter and ministration of death, being severed from Christ, I should say nothing amisse, but what *Paul* speaketh, that his Gospel was a savour of death to many, take the most powerful preaching the most sweet discourse, the most plain writings of the free grace and salvation in the Gospel, take all the preachings of Jesus Christ himself and his Apostles, & you shall not find life in them unlesse ye be led by that spirit of Christ unto himself, who is the Resurrection and the life, It will no more save you then the Co-

Covenant of Works, unlesse that word abide and dwell in your hearts, to make you believe in him, and embrace him with your souls whom God hath sent to you. Suppose you heard all, and heard it gladly and loved it, and could discourse well upon it, and teach it to others, yet if you be not driven out of your selves, out of your own righteousness as well as sins, and pursued to this city of refuge, Jesus Christ, you shall have not eternal life. Your knowledge of the truth of the Gospel, and your obedience to Gods Law will certainly kill you, and as certainly, as your ignorance and disobedience, unlesse you have embraced in your souls that good thing Jesus Christ contained in these truths, who is the Diamond of that Golden Ring of the Scriptures, and unlesse your soul embrace these promises as soul-saving, as containing the chief good, and worthy of all acceptation, as well as your minde receive these as true and faithfull sayings, 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Thus ye see Christ Jesus is either the subject of all in the Scriptures, or the end of it all. He is the very proper subject of the Gospel: Paul knew nothing but Christ crucified in his Preaching, and he is the very proper end and scope of the Law for righteousness, Rom. 10. 3. All the preaching of a Covenant of Works, all the curses and threatnings of the Bible, all the rigid exactions of obedience, all come to this one great designe, not that we may set about such a walking to please God, or do something to pacifie him, but that we being concluded under sin and wrath on the one hand, and an impossibility to save our selves on the other hand, Gal. 3, 22. Rom. 5. 20, 21. may be pursued in to Jesus Christ for righteousness and life, who is both able to save us, and ready to welcome us; Therefore the Gospel opens the door of salvation in Christ, the Law is behind with fire and sword, and destruction pursuing us, and all for this end, that sinners may come to him and have life. Thus the Law is made the Pedagogue

Christ the subject end of all in the Word. 45
of the soul to lead it to Christ, Christ is behind us,
cursing, condemning, threatening us, and he is before
us with stretched out arms ready to receive us, blesse
us, and save us, inviting, promising, exhorting to
come and have life. Christ is on Mount *Sinai*, deli-
vering the Law with Thunders, *Act. 7. 38.* and he
is on Mount *Sion*, in the calm voice, he is both upon
the mountain of cursings and blessings, and on both
doing the part of a Mediator, *Gal. 3. 19, 20.* It is
love that is in his heart which made him first cover his
countenance with frowns and threats, and it is love
that again displayes it self in his smiling countenance,
Thus souls are inclosed with love pursuing, and
love receiving: And thus the Law which seems most
contrary to the Gospel, testifies of Christ, it gives
him this testimony, that except salvation be in him,
it is no where else; the Law sayes, it is not in me,
seek it not in obedience, I can do nothing but destroy
you if you abide under my iurisdiction: The Cere-
monies and Sacrifices say, if you can behold the end
of this Ministry, (if a vail be not on your hearts,
as it was on *Moses* face, *2 Cor. 3. 13, 14.*) you may
see where it is, it is not in your obedience, but in
the death and sufferings of the Son of God whom
we represent. Then the Gospel takes all these Co-
verings and Vails away, and gives a plain and open
testimony of him, *There is no Name under heaven to be
saved by but Christs.* The Old Testament spake by
figures and signs as dumb men do, but the New speak-
eth in plain words, and with open face. Now I say
for all this, that there is no salvation but in him, yet
many souls, not only these who live in their grosse
sins, and have no form of godlinesse, but even the
better sort of people, that have some knowledge
and civility, and a kind of zeal for God, yet they
do not come to him that they may have life, *Rom. 10. 1.
2, 3.* They do not submit to the righteousness of God:
Here is the March that divides the wayes of Heaven
and Hell; coming to Jesus Christ, and forsaking our
selves:

46 *What searching of the Scriptures imports* W
selves: the confidence of these souls is chiefly ure
only in that little knowledge, or zeal, or profess not
they have, they do not as really abhor themselves t,
for their own righteousness, as for their unright ha
ousnesse, they make that the covering of their nat at
nesse and filthinesse, which is in it self as menstr wh
and unclean as any thing. It is now the very prop it,
sion and natural inclination of our hearts to stand fou
right in our selves: Fath bowes a soul back to wo
on Christs righteousness, but presumption lifts por
a soul upon its own bottom, *How can ye believe* the
seeks honour one of another. The engagement of if
soul to its own credite or estimation, the eng yo
ments of self-love, and self-honour, do lift up a pou
that it cannot submit to Gods righteousness, cap
righteousnesse in another: And therefore many en
dream and think that they have eternal life, who on
awake in the end, and find that it was but a dream, re
night fancy. th

Now from all this, I would enforce this duty up kn
your Consciences, to search the Scriptures, if y en
think to have eternal life, search them, if you wo is
know Christ, whom to know is eternal life, th W
again search them, for these are they that test Li
of him. Searching imports diligence, much d so
gence, it is a serious work, it is not a common fin
ing of an easie and common thing, but it is a ser ne
and scrutiny for some hidden thing, for some spe w
thing. It is not bare reading of the Scriptures the se
will answer this duty, except it be diligent and d fu
reading, and it is not that alone, except the Sp ju
within meditate on them, and by meditation acc C
plish a diligent search. There is some hidden see N
that you must search for that is inclosed within p
covering of words and sentences, there is a myst t
of wisdom that you must apply your hearts to sea m
out, *Eccles. 7. 5.* Jesus Christ is the Treasure tha d
hid in this field, O a precious treasure of eternall P
now then souls search into the fields of the Scr Y
rati

What searching of the Scriptures imports. 47

ures, *Prov.* 2.4. for him as for hid treasure. It is not only truth you must seek and buy, and not sell it, but it is life you would search, here an object that may not only take up your understandings, but satisfy your hearts. Think not you have found all when you have found the truth there, and learned it, no, except you have found life there, you have found nothing, you have missed the Treasure. If you would profite by the Scriptures, you must bring both your understandings and your affections to them, and depart not till they both return full: If you bring your understanding to seek the truth, you may find truth, but not *truly*, you may find it, but you are not found of it: you may lead truth captive, and inclose it in a prison of your mind, and encompass it about with a guard of corrupt affections, that it shall have no issue, no out-going to the rest of your soul and wayes, and no influence on them; you may know the truth, but you are not known of it, and brought in captive to the obedience of it. The Treasure that is hid in the Scriptures is Jesus Christ, whose intire and perfect Name is, *Way, Truth, and Life*, He is a living Truth, and true Life: Therefore Christ is the adæquat object of the soul, commensurable to all its faculties, he hath truth in him to satisfy the mind, and he hath life and goodnesse in him to satiate the heart: therefore if thou would find Jesus Christ, bring thy whole soul to seek him, as *Paul* expresseth it; he is true and faithful, and worthy of all acceptation, then bring thy judgement to find the light of Truth, and thy affections to embrace the life of goodnesse that is in him. Now as much as ye find of him, so much have ye profited in the Scriptures: If you find commands there which you cannot obey, search again and you may find strength under that command, dig a little deeper, and you shall find Jesus the end of an impossible command, and when you have found him, you have found life and strength to obey, and you have

48 *The Scriptures a sure foundation.*

have found a propitiation and sacrifice for transgressing and not obeying. If you find curses in it, search again and you shall find Jesus Christ under that malediction a curse for us, you shall find him the end of the cross for righteousness to every one that believes. While you know all the Letter of the Scripture, yet you must search into the Spirit of it, that it may be printed into your spirits: all you know does you no good but as it is received in love, unless your souls become a living Epistle, and the Word written out be written on the heart, you have found nothing. As for you that cannot read the Scriptures, if it is possible, take that pains to learn to read them. O ye knew what they contain, and whom they bear witness of, you would have little quietness till you could read, at least his love-epistles to sinners: if you cannot learn, be not discouraged, but if your desires within be fervent, your endeavours to have it read by others will be more earnest. But it is not so much the reading of much of it that profits as the pondering of these things in our hearts, and digesting them by frequent Meditation, till they become the food of the soul: This was *David's* way and by this he grew to the stature of a tall and well-bodied Christian.

Ephes. 2. 20. And builded upon the foundation of the Apostles, &c.

Believers are the Temple of the living God in which he dwells and walks, 2 Cor. 6. 16. Every one of them is a little Sanctuary, a Temple to his Majesty, *Sanctifie the Lord's hosts in your hearts*; though he be the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, yet he is pleased to condescend down to this poor Cottage of a creature's heart, and dwell in it: Is not this as great a humbling and con-

scending

ascending, for the Father to come down off his Throne of Glory, to the poor base footstool of the creatures soul, as for the Son to come down in the state of a servant, and become in the form of sinfull flesh. But then he is a Temple and Sanctuary to them, and he shall be to you a Sanctuary, *Isai. 8.* A place of refuge, a secret hiding place; now as every one is a little separated ritired Temple, so they all conjoynd make up one Temple, one visible body in which he dwells; therefore *Peter* calls them living Stones, built up in a spiritual house to God, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* All these little Temples make up one House and Temple fitly joyned together, in which God shews manifest signes of his presence and working: unto this the Apostle in this place alluds, The Communion, and Union of Christians with God, is of such a nature, that all the relations and points of conjunction in the creatures are taken to resemble it, and hold it out to us. We are *Citizens* saith he, and *Domesticks, household-men*, and so dwels in his house, and then *we are his house* beside: Now ye know there are two principal things in a House, the foundation and the corner stone, the one supports the building, the other unites it, and holds it together: These two parts of this spiritual building are here pointed at, the foundation of every particular stone, and of the whole building is the Doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles, as holding out Jesus Christ to souls, the rock on which our house should be builded. Not the Apostles or Prophets, far lesse Pastors and Teachers since; for they are but at best workers together with God and imployed in the building of the house, nor yet their Doctrine, but as it holds out that true foundation that God hath laid in Sion, *Isai. 28.* Which is Jesus Christ, for other foundations can no man lay: And then the corner stone is that same Jesus Christ, who reaches from the bottom even to the top of the building, and immediatly toucheth every stone, and both quickens it in it self, and unites them together.

50 *The Scriptures a sure foundation.*

Well then, here is a sure foundation to build upon, our eternal happinesse, the word of God which endures for ever holds it out to us: all men are building upon something, every man is about some establishment of his hopes, layes some foundation to his confidence which he may stand upon. They are one of the two that Christ speaketh of, *Luk. 6. 46.* one builds one the *Rock*, another on the *Sand*, now the foundation is, so is the house, a changeable foundation makes a falling house, a sure foundation maketh a unchangeable house, a house without a foundation will quickly prove no house; now whatever men build their hope and confidence upon, beside the word of God, his sure promise and sure covenant, and Jesus Christ in them, they build upon no foundation, or upon a sandy foundation. *All flesh is as the flower and the flower and perfection of it as the flower of the field*, here is the name and character of all creature's perfections, of the most excellent endowments of mind, of all the specious actions of men, it is but vanishing and vanity, every man at his best estate is such, yea altogether such: you who have no more to build upon, but your prosperity and wealth, that is but sand and dung; would any man build a house upon a dung-hill. You who have no other hope but in your own good prayers, and meaning your own reformatiōs and repentances, your professions and practices, know this, that your hope is like a spiders house, like the web that she hath laboriously exercised her self about all the week over, and then when you lean upon that house it shall fall through and not sustain your weight; whatsoever be beside this Living Stone Jesus Christ, who is the very substance of the Word and Promises, it shall undoubtedly prove thy shame and confusion: But to hold the opposition the Prophet maketh between the Word and these other things, *The word of God shall stand for ever, Isa. 40. 6, 7, 8.* and therefore Peter maketh it an incorruptible seed of which

believers are begotten, 1 Pet. 1. 23. it is the unchangeable truth and immutable faithfulness of God that makes his word so sure, *it is builded up to the Heavens*: Therefore the Psalmist often commends the word of the Lord, as a *tried word*, as *purified* seven times, it hath endured the triall and proof of all men, of all tentations, of all generations, it hath often been put in the furnace of questions and doubtings, it hath often been tried in the fire of afflictions, but it came forth like pure Gold without drosse. This is Faiths foundation, *God hath spoken in his Holinesse*, and therefore though all men be liars, yet God will be found true, deceives none, and is deceived of none. The Lord hath taken a latitude to himself in his working, he loves to shew his Sovereignty in much of that, and therefore he changes it in men, and upon men as he pleaseth, yet he hath condescended to limite and bound himself by his Word, and in this to shew his faithfulness. And therefore, though heaven and earth should passe away, though he should annihilat this world, and create new ones, yet *not one jot of his word shall fail*. The earth is established sure, though it hath no foundation, for the word of his Command supports it: And yet a Believers confidence is upon a surer ground, *Though the earth should be removed, yet it cannot passe or fail*, saith our Lord: And therefore the Psalmist useth to boast in God, *That though the earth were removed, and the flouds lifted up their voice, yet he would not fear*, because his foundation was unshaken for all that, the Word is not moved, when the world is moved, and therefore he was not moved: The worlds stability depends upon a word of command, but our salvation depends on a word of Promise. Now you know promises puts an obligation upon the person, which commands do not; a man may change his commands as he pleaseth to his children or servants, but he may not change his promises; therefore the promises of God putteth an obligation upon him, who is

52 *Christ the Foundation, and Corner-stone.*
Truth it self, not to fail in performance, or rather he is to himself by his unchangeable will and pleasure, by his faithfulness and truth, an obliging and binding Law: when no creature could set bounds to him, he incloses himself within the bounds of his promises to us, and gives all flesh liberty to challenge him if he be not faithfull.

Now all the promises of God are yea, and amen, in *Jesus Christ*, that is, established and confirmed in him. *Christ* is the surety of them, and so the certainty and stability of them depends upon him, at least, to our sense, for God in all his dealing condescends to our weakness, that we may have strong consolation: his promise might suffice to ground our Faith, but he addeth an oath to his Promise, and he taketh *Christ* for the performance, and therefore *Christ* may be called the truth indeed, the substantiall word of God, for he is the substance of the written and preached word, and then he is the very certainty and assurance of it, the Scriptures testifie of him, and leads us to this rock higher then we to build upon, and against this the gates of hell cannot prevail: let the Word lead not a soul into *Christ* himself, the soul hath no foundation, though thou hear the Word, though thou know the Word, yea, suppose thou could reach others, and instruct the ignorant, yet all that will be no foundation, as good as none, except thou do it, and what is it to do the word? But to believe in him whom the Word testifieth of, this is the work of God to resign thy soul to his mercies and merits, and have no confidence in the flesh: to scrape out all the rubbish of works and performances, and parts out of the foundation, and singly to roll thy souls weight upon Gods promises, and *Christs* purchase, to look with *Paul* on all things beside in thee, and about thee, as dung and dross, that thou can lean no weight upon, and to remove that dunghill from the foundation of thy hope, that *Jesus Christ* may be the only foundation of thy soul.

Christ the Foundation, and Corner-stone. 53

God hath only laid him in the Church for a sure foundation, that whoſo believeth on him may not be ſhaken: what ever beſide, a ſoul be eſtabliſhed on, though it appear very ſolid, and the ſoul be ſetled and fixed upon it, yet a day will come that will unſettle that ſoul, and raze that foundation, either it ſhall be ſo done in thy conſcience, or it muſt be done at length, when that great tempeſt of Gods indignation ſhall blow from Heaven, againſt all unrighteouſneſſe of men, in the day of accounts, then ſhall thy houſe fall, and the fall of it ſhall be great. But a ſoul eſtabliſhed upon the ſure promiſes, and upon Chriſt in whom they are *Yea and Amen*, ſhall abide that ſtorm, and in that day have confidence before God, and have wherewith to answer in Jeſus Chriſt all the challenges of divine Juſtice, and the accusations of conſcience, *He that truſts in him ſhall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be moved*, you ſee all things elſe change, and therefore mens hopes and joyes periſh even here, the tentations and revolutions of the times undermines their confidence and joy, and the blaſts of the Northerne wind of affliction blowes away their hopes.

Now as Chriſt is the Foundation, ſo is he the Corner-ſtone of the building; it is Chriſt who hath removed that Partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles, even the Ceremonies of the one, and the Atheiſme of the other, *He is our peace*, who hath made of two one. The two ſides of the houſe of God are united by this Corner-ſtone Jeſus Chriſt: Thus we who were the Temples of Satan, are made the Temples of God; thus poor ſtranger Gentiles who had no intereſt in the Covenant of Promiſes, come to ſhare with *Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, and to be founded upon the Doctrine of the Prophets, who taught the Jewish Church: Chriſt is the bond of Chriſtians, this is the Head, into which all the Members ſhould grow up into a Body. Diſtance of Place, difference of Nations, diſtinction of Languages,

54 *Christ the Foundation, and Corner-stone*
all these cannot separate the members of Jesus Christ, they are more one, though consisting of divers languages, Tongues, and Customs and Dispositions, of the people of one Nation, or children of one family; for one Lord, one Spirit, unites all: Alas, that all are not united in affection and judgement. What doth the sides of this house contend and wrestle against another, when there is such a Corner-stone joyning them together? Are there not many Christians who cannot endure to look upon one another who are yet both placed in one building of the Temple of God? Alas, this is sad and shameful. But that which I would especially have observed in this, is, that Jesus Christ is such a Foundation that reacheth throughout the whole Building, and immediatly toucheth every stone in the Building, it is such a Foundation as riseth from the bottom to the top, and therefore Jesus Christ is both the Author and Finisher of our Faith, the beginning and the end, the first stone, and the last stone of our building may rise upon him, and by him; the least degree of grace and the greatest perfection of it, both are in him, and therefore Christians should be most dependent creatures, dependent in their first being, and in their well-being, in their being, and growing, wholly dependent upon Christ; that *out of his fulnesse, the* *may receive grace, and then more grace for grace,* that all may appear to be grace indeed. Now I beseech you my beloved in the Lord, to know whereupon ye are builded, or ought to be builded. There are two great errours in the time, take heed of them, one is the Doctrine of some, and another is the practice of the most part: Some do prefer their own fancies and night-dreams, and the imaginations of their own heart to the Word of God, and upon pretence of revelation, of new light, do cast a mist upon that Word of God which is a light that hath shined from the beginning. Be not deceived, but try the spirits whether they be of God or not. There are many

Christ the Foundation, and Corner-stone. 55
Many pretend to much of the Spirit, and therefore
set out against the Word, as *Letter*, as *Flesh*: But
O my Brethren, believe not every Doctrine that calls it
self a spirit, *that spirit is not of God that hears not*
Gods voice, as Christ reasons against the Jews, seek
ye more of the spirit of Christ which he promiseth,
who is a Spirit, that teacheth all things, and bringeth
unto remembrance these blessed sayings, and leads us
into all truth: It shall be both safest and sweetest to
have you to meditate on that word of the Prophets and
Apostles, and the entrance into it shall give you
light, an old light which was from the beginning,
and therefore a true light (for all truth is eternal)
and yet a new light to your sense and feeling: It is
both an old command, and a new command, an old
word, and a new word; If thou search it by the
Spirits inspiration, that old word shall be made new,
that letter made spirit and life: Such are the words
that Christ speaks. But yet there are many who do
not reject the Scriptures in judgement, who not-
withstanding do not build on them in practice: Alas,
it may be said of the most part of professed Christi-
ans among us, that they are not builded upon the
foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, but upon
the sayings of fallible and weak men. What ground
have many of you for your Faith, but because the Mi-
nister saith so? you believe so: the most part live in
an implicate faith, & practice that in themselves which
they condemn in Papists. You do not labour to search
the Scriptures, that upon that foundation you may
build your Faith in the questioned truths of this age,
that so you may be able to answer to these that ask
a reason of the Faith that is in you. Alas, simple
souls, you believe every thing, and yet really believe
nothing, because you believe not the Word, as the
Word of the living God, but taketh it from men
upon their authority: Therefore when an temptation
cometh, when any gainsayings of the truth, you
cannot stand against it, because your Faith hath no
foun-

56 *What the Scriptures principally teach.*
foundation, but the sayings of men, or Acts of Ambassadors. And therefore as men whom you trust who hold out light unto you, holds out darknesse instead of light, you embrace that darknesse also: I beseech you, be builded upon the foundation of Prophets and Apostles, not upon them, but upon the whereon they were builded, the infallible truths of God. You have the Scriptures, search them, for you have reasonable souls, search them; other mens faith will not save you, you cannot see to walk in heaven by other mens light, more then you can see by their eyes: You have eyes of your own, soules of your own, subordinate to none but to the God of spirits, and Lord of consciences, Jesus Christ: and therefore examine all that is spoken to you from the Word according to the Word, and receive no more upon trust from men, but as you find it upon trial to be the truths of God.

2 Tim. 1. 13. *Hold fast that form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in Faith and Love, &c.*

Here is the sum of Religion, here you have a compend of the Doctrine of the Scriptures: all divine Truth may be reduced to these two Heads, Faith and Love, what we ought to believe, and what we ought to do? This is all the Scriptures teach, and this is all we have to learn. What have we to know but what God hath revealed of himself to us? and what have we to do but what he commands us? In a word, what have we to learn in this world, but to believe in Christ, and love him, and so live to him? This is the duty of man, and this is the dignity of man, and the way to eternal life: Therefore the Scriptures that are given to

to be a *lamp to our feet*, and a *guide to our paths* contains a perfect and exact rule *credendorum & faciendorum*, of faith and manners, of doctrine, and practice; we have in the Scriptures many truths revealed to us of God, and of the works of his hands; many precious truths, but that which most of all concerns us, is to know God and our selves, this is the special excellency of the reasonable creature, that it is made capable to know its Creator, and to reflect upon its own being. Now we have to know of our selves what we are now, and what man once was, and accordingly to know of God, what he once revealed of himself, and what he doth now reveal: I say, the Scriptures holds out to our consideration a twofold estate of mankind, and according to these, a twofold revelation of the Mystery of God: We look on man now, and we find him another thing then he was once, but we do not find God one thing at one time, and another thing at another time, for there is *no shadow of change in him*, and, *he is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*: Therefore we ask not what he was, and what he is now, but how he manifests himself differently, according to the different estates of man, as we find in the Scriptures, man once righteous and blessed, *Eccles. 7. 29.* and God making him such according to his own image, *Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 24.* In *righteousnesse and true holinesse*, we find him in communion and friendship with God, set next to the divine Majesty, and above the works of his hand, and all things under his feet: How holy was he? and how happy? And happy he could not choose but be, since he was holy, being conformed and like unto God in his will and affection, choosing that same delight, that same pleasure with God, in his understanding, knowing God and his will, and likewise his own happinesse in such a conformity, he could not but have much communion with him, that had such conformity to him, union being the foundation of communion, and great peace and solid tranquility in him.

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Now in this state of mankind God expressed his goodnesse, and wisdom, and power, his holinesse and righteousness: These are the attributes that he most brightly, in the very morning of the Creation God revealed himself to man as a holy and just God, whose eyes could behold no iniquity, and therefore he made him upright and made a Covenant of love and peace with him, to give him immortall and eternall life, to continue him in his happy estate, if he continued in well-doing, *Rom. 10. 5. Do as I command and live.* In which Covenant indeed there were free outbreakings of the glorious grace, and free condescendence of God, for it was no lesse free grace and undeserved favour to promise life to his obedience, then now to promise life to our Faith, so that if the Lord had continued that Covenant with us, we ought to have called it grace, and would have been saved by grace as well as now, thought it be true that there is some more occasion given to mans nature to be saved and glory in that way, yet not at all before *Rom. 4. 2.*

But we have scarcely found man in such an estate till we have found him finfull and miserable, and fallen from his excellency. That sun shined in the dawning of the Creation, but before ye can know what it is, it is eclipsed and darkened with sin and misery, as if the Lord had only set up such a creature in the firmament of Glory, to let him know how blessed he could make him, and wherein his blessednesse consists, and then presently to throw him down from his excellency, when you find him mounting up to the heavens, and spreading himself thus in holinesse and happinesse like a Bay tree, hold again, and you find him not, though you seek him, you shal not find him, his place doth not know him: he is like one that comes out with a great majesty upon a stage, and personats some Monarch or Emperour in the world, and then ere you can withdraw your thoughts to know what he is, he is turned

turned of the stage and appears in some base and detestable appearance, so quickly is man stripped of all these glorious ornaments of holiness, and puts on the vile rags of sin and wretchedness, and is cast down from the Throne of eminency above the creatures, and from fellowship with God, to be a slave and servant to the dust of his feet, and to have Communion with the devil and his angels. And now ye have man holden out in Scripture as the only wretched piece of the Creation, as the very plague of the world, *The whole Creation groaning under him*, Rom. 8. *and in pain to be delivered of such a burthen*, of such an execration and curse and astonishment: you find the testimony of the Word condemns him altogether, concludes him under sin, and then under a curse, and makes all flesh guilty in Gods sight, the Word speaketh otherwise of us then we think of our selves; *Their imagination is only evil continually*, Gen. 6. 5. O then, what must our affections be, that are certainly more corrupt? What then must our way be? *All flesh hath corrupted their way and done abominable works, and none doth good*, Psal. 14. 1, 2, 3. But many flee in unto their good hearts as their last refuge, when they are beaten from these out-works of their actions and wayes, but the Scriptures shall storm that also, *The heart is deceitfull above all things, who can know it*, Jer. 17. 9. *it is desperately wicked*: in a word, man is become the most lamentable spectacle in the world, a compend of all wickedness and misery, inclosed within the walls of inability and impossibility to help himself, shut up within the prison of despair, a stinking loathsome and irksome dungeon: It is like the myrie pit that *Jeremiah* was cast into, that there was no out-coming, and no pleasant abode in it.

Now mans estate being thus, nay, having made himself thus, and sought out to himself such sad inventions, Eccles. 7. 29. And having destroyed himself, Hos. 13. 9. What think ye? should any pity him? If he had fallen in such a pit of misery ignorantly and un-

60 *The wonderful way of reconciling sinners.*

unwillingly, he had been an object of compassion, but having cast himself headlong into it, who should have pity on him? Or who should go aside to ask how he doth, and bemoan him? *Jer. 15. 5. But behold the Lord pities man as a father doth his children, Psal. 103.* His compassions fail not, he comes by such a loathsome and contemptible object, and casts his skirts over it, and saith, live, *Ezek. 16. And maketh it a time of love.* I say, no flesh could have expected any more of God, then to make man happy and holy, and to promise him life in well doing, but to repair that happinesse after it is wilfully lost, and to give life to evil doers and sinners: O how far was it from *Adams* expectation when he fled from God? Here then is the wonder, that when men and Angels were in expectation of the revelation of his wrath from Heaven against their wickednesse, and the execution of the curse, man was concluded under, that even then God is pursuing man, and pursues him with love, and opens up to him his very heart and bowels of love in Jesus Christ? Behold then the second revelation and manifestation of God, in a way of grace, pure grace, of mercy and pity towards lost sinners. *The kinnesse of God hath appeared, not by our works, but according to his abundant mercy shewed in Christ Jesus, Tt. 3. 4. 5.* So then we have this purpose of Gods love unfolded to us in the Scriptures, and this is the substance of them, both Old and New Testament, or the end of them, *Rom. 10. 4. Christ is the end of the Law to all sinners concluded under sin, and a curse by it, our Lord Jesus, the good Ebedmelech, comes and casts down a cord to us, and drawes us up out of the pit of sin and misery, he comes to this prison; and opens the doors to let captives free, so then we have God holden out to us a Redeemer, as a repairer of our breaches, God in Christ reconciling the world; O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self, but in me is thy help found, Hos. 13. 9. He finds to himself a ransom to satisfie his justice, Job 33. 24. He finds a propi-*
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The wonderful way of reconciling sinners. 67
satisfaction to take away sin, a sacrifice to pacifie and appease his wrath, he finds one of our Brethren, but his own Son in whom he is well pleased. And then holds out all this to sinners that they may be satisfied in their own consciences, as he is in his own mind: God hath satisfied himself in Christ, you have not that to do, he is not now to be reconciled to us, for he was never really at odds, though he covered his countenance with frowns and threats, since the fall, and hath appeared in fire and thunders, and whirlwind which are terrible, yet his heart had alwayes love in it to such persons, and therefore he is come near in Christ, and about reconciling us to himself, here is the businesse then, to have our souls reconciled to him, to take away the enmity within us, and as he is satisfied with his Son, so to satisfie our selves with him, and be as well pleased in his Redemption and purchase, as the Father is, and then you believe indeed in him.

Now if this were accomplished, what have we more to do but to love him, and to live to him, when you have found in the Scripture, and believed with the heart, what man once was, and what he now is, what God once appeared, and what he now manifests himself in the Gospel, ye have no more to do but to search in the same Scriptures what ye henceforth ought to be: Ye who find your estate recovered in Christ, ask, *what manner of persons ought we to be?* And the Scripture shall also give you that form of sound words, which may not only teach you to believe in him, but to love him, and obey his commands: The Law that before condemned you, is now by Christ put in your hands to guide you, and conduct you in the way, and teacheth you how to live henceforth to his glory. *The grace of God that hath appeared to all men, Tit. 2. 12. teacheth us, that denying ungodlinesse and worldly lusts, we should live godly, and righteously, and soberly in this present world.* Here is the sum of the rule of your practice and conversation,

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62 *Their duty, who are reconciled to God.*

tion, piety towards God, equity towards men, and sobriety towards our selves, self-denial, and world-denial, and lust-denial, to give up with the world and our own lusts, henceforth to have no more to do with them, to resigne them, not for a time, not in part, but wholly and for ever in affection, and by parts in practice and endeavour, and then to resign, and give up our selves to him, to live to him, and live in him.

Thus we have given you a sum of the Doctrine of the Scriptures, of that which is to be believed, and that which is to be done as our duty. Now we shall speak a word of these two cardinal Graces, which are the compend of all graces: as the objects of them are the Abridgement of the Scriptures: *Faith* and *Love*, these sound words can profite us nothing, unlesse we hold them fast with Faith and Love.

Faith is like the Fountain-grace, streams come out of it that cleanseth the consciences from the guilt of sin, and purifieth the heart from the filth of sin, because it is that which cometh to the *Fountain opened up in the house of David*, and draweth water out of these *wells of salvation*. If you consider the fall and ruine of mankind, you will find infidelity and unbelief the Fountain of it, as well as the seal of it. Unbelief of the Law of God, of his promises and threatenings: This was first called in question, and when once called in question, it is half denied. Hath God said so, that you shall die? It is not far off, you shall not surely die: Here then was the very beginning of mans ruine, he did not retain in his knowledge, and believe with his heart the truth and faithfulness, and holiness of God; which unbelief was conjoyred and intermingled with much pride, *you shall be as Gods*: he began to live out of God, in himself, not remembering that his life was a stream of that divine Fountain, that being cut off from it would dry up. Now therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, an expert Saviour, and very learned, and compleat for this work, he brings
man

man up out this pit of misery, by that same way he fell into it, he fell down by unbelief, and he brings him up out of it by Faith: This is the cord that is cast down to the poor soul in the dungeon, or rather his Faith is the dead-grip of the cord of divine promises, which are sent in to the captive prisoner, and by vertue whereof he is drawn out into the light of salvation. Unbelief of the Law of God did first destroy man, now the belief of the Gospel saves him. The not believing of the Lords threatnings, was the beginning of his ruine, the believing of his precious promises, is his salvation: I say more, as our destruction began at the unbelief of the Law, so our salvation must begin at the belief of it. The Law and Divine Justice went out of his sight, and so he sinned; now the Law entering into the Conscience, discovers a mans sin, and makes sins abound, and that is the beginning of our remedy, to know our disease. But as long as this is hid from a mans eyes, he is shut up in unbelief, he is sealed and confirmed in his miserable estate, and so kept from Jesus Christ the remedy. Thus unbelief first and last destroyes: Faith might have preserved *Adam*, and Faith again may restore thee, who hath fallen in *Adam*.

There is a great mistake of Faith among us, some taking it for a strong and blind confidence, that admits of no questions or doubts in the soul: and so vainly perswading themselves that they have it; and some again conceiving it to be such an assurance of salvation, as instantly comforts the soul, and looseth all objections, and so foolishly vexing their own souls, and disquieting themselves in vain for the want of that, which if they understood what it is, they would find they have it. I say, many souls conceive that to be the best Faith, that never doubted, and hath alwayes lodged in them, and kept them in peace since they were born. But seeing all men are once aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the Covenant of Promise, and without God in the world,

world, and so without Christ also, it is certain that these souls who have alwayes blest themselves in their own hearts, and cryed peace, peace, and were never afraid of the wrath to come, have imbraced an imagination and dream of their own heart, for true Faith. It is not big and stout words that will prove it; men may defie the devil and all his works, and speak very confidently, and yet God knows they are captives by him at his pleasure, and not far from that misery which they think they have escaped. Satan works in them with such a crafty conveyance, that they cannot perceive it, and how should they perceive it? For we are by nature dead in sins, and so cannot feel nor know that we are such: It is a token of life to feel pain, a certain token, for dead things are senselesse. You know how Jugglers may deceive your very senses, and make them believe they see that which is not, and feel that which they feel not: Oh how much more easie is it for Satan, such an ingenious and experimented spirit, assisted with the help of our deceitfull hearts, to cast such a mist over the eyes of hearts, and make them believe any thing, how easily may he hide our misery from us, and make us believe it is well with us: And thus multitudes of souls perish in the very opinion of salvation: that very thing which they call Faith, that strong ungrounded perswasion, it is no other thing then the unbelief of the heart, unbelief, I mean of the holy Law, of divine Justice, and the wrath to come: for if these once entred into the souls consideration, they would certainly cast down that strong hold of vain confidence, that Satan keeps all the house in peace by: Now this secure and presumptuous despising of all threatnings, and all convictions, it is vertished over to the poor soul with the colour and appearance of Faith in the Gospel, they think to believe in Christ, is nothing else, but never to be afraid of hell: whereas it is nothing else but a soul fleeing in to Christ for fear of hell; and fleeing from the wrath to come to the city of refuge.

Now

Now again there are some other souls quite contrary minded, that run upon an other extremity, they once question whether they have Faith? And alwayes question it. You shall find them alwayes out of one doubt into another, and still returning upon these debates, whether am I in Christ or not? And often peremptorly concluding that they are not in him, and that they believe not in him: I must confesse that a soul must once question the matter, or they shall never be certain, nay a soul must once conclude that it is void of God, and without Christ, but having discovered that, I see no more use and fruit of your frequent debates and janglings about interest: I would say then unto such souls, that if you now question it, it is indeed the very time to put it out of question. And how? Not by framing or seeking answers to your objections, not by searching into thy self to find something to prove it, not by more disputing about it, for when shall these have an end? But simply and plainly by setting about that which is questioned. Are you in doubt, if you be believers? How shall it be resolved then, but by believing indeed? It is now the very time thou art called to make application of thy soul to Christ, if thou thinkest that thou cannot make application of Christ to thy soul: If thou cannot know if he be thine, then how shall thou know it? But by choosing him for thine, and imbracing him in thy soul: Now I say, if that time which is spent about such unprofitable debates, were spent in solide and serious endeavours about the ~~same~~ in debate, it would quickly be out of debate, if ~~we~~ were more in the study of obedience to those commands, then in the dispute whether you have obeyed or not, you would sooner win to satisfaction in it. This I say rather, because the weightier and principall parts of the Gospel are those direct acts of Faith and love to Jesus Christ, both these are the outgoings of the soul to him: now again, Examination of our Faith and assurance, are but secondary.

dary and consequent reflections upon our selves, and are the soul returning in again to it self to find what is within. Therefore I say a Christian is principally called to the first, and alwayes called, it is the chief duty of man, which for no inevidence, no doubting, no questioning should be left undone? If ye be in any ~~hesitation~~ *hesitation* whether you are believers or not? I assure the chiefest thing, and most concerning is, rather to believe then to know it, it is a Christians being to believe, its indeed his comfort and well-being to know it, but if you do not know it, then by all means so much the more set about it presently, let the soul consider Christ and the precious promises, and lay its weight upon him; This you ought to do, and not to leave the other undone.

2. Secondly, I say to such souls, that it is the mistake of the very nature of Faith that leads them to such perplexities, and causeth such inevidence: It is not so much the inevidence of marks and fruits that makes them doubt, as the very misapprehension of the thing it self, for as long as they mistake it in its own nature, no sign, no mark can satisfie in it. You take Faith to be a perswasion of Gods love, that calms and quiets the mind, now such a perswasion needs no signes to know it by, it is manifest by its own presence, as light by its own brightnesse. It were a foolish question to ask any how they knew that they were perswaded of anothers affection, the very perswasion it self maketh it self more certain to the soul then any token. So then while you question whether you have Faith or not, and in the mean time take Faith to be nothing else but such a perswasion, it is in vain to bring any marks or sings to convince you that you have Faith, for if such a perswasion and assurance were in you, it would be more powerful to assure your hearts of it self, then any thing else, and while you are doubting of it, it is more manifest that you have it not, then any signs or marks can be able to make it appear that you have it. If any would

would labour to convince a blind man that he saw the light, and give him signs and tokens of the lights shining, the blind man could not believe him, for it is more certain to himself that he sees not, then any evidence can make the contrary probable: You are still wishing and seeking such a Faith as puts all out of question. Now when Ministers brings any marks to prove you have true Faith, it cannot satisfy or settle you, because your very questioning proves that ye have not that which ye question, if you had such a perswasion, you would not question it: so then, as long as you are in that mistake concerning the true nature of Faith, all the signs of the word cannot settle you.

But I say, if once you understood the true nature of Faith, it would be more clear in it self unto you, then readily signs or marks could make it, especially in the time of tentation: If you would know then what it is indeed, consider what the word of God holds out concerning himself or us, and the solid belief of that in the heart, hath something of the nature of saving Faith in it. The Lord gives a testimony concerning man, that he is born in sin, that he is dead in sins, and all his imaginations are only evill continually. Now I say to receive this truth into the soul upon Gods Testimony, is a point of Faith, the Lord in his word concludes all under sin and wrath, so then for a soul to conclude it self also under sin and wrath, is a point of Faith: Faith is the souls testimony to Gods truth, the word is Gods testimony, now then, if a soul receive this testimony within, whether it be Law or Gospel, it is an act of Faith, if a soul condemn it self, and judge it self, that is a setting to our Seal that God is true, who speaketh in his Law and so it is a believing in God. I say more, to believe with the heart, that we cannot believe, is a great point of sound belief, because it is a sealing of that word of God, *The heart is desperately wicked, and of our selves we can do nothing.* Now

Now I am perswaded if such souls knew this, they would put an end to their many contentions and wranglings about this point, and would rather bless God that hath opened their eyes to see themselves then contend with him, for that they have no Faith. It is light only that discovers darknesse, and Faith only that discerns unbelief: it is life and health only that feels pain and sicknesse, for if all were alike, nothing could be found, as in dead bodies: Now I say to such souls as believes in God the Law-giver, believe also in Christ the Redeemer, and what is that? Its not to know that I have interest in him, no, that must come after, it is the Spirits sealing after believing which puts it self out of question, when it comes, and so if you had it, you needed not many signs to know it by, at least you would not doubt of it, more then he that seeth the light can question it. But I say, to believe in Christ is simply this, I, whatsoever I be; ungodly, wretched, polluted, desperate, am willing to have Jesus Christ for my Saviour, I have no other help, or hope, if it be not in him, it is I say, to lean the weight of thy soul on this foundation-stone laid in Zion, to embrace the promises of the Gospel albeit general, as *worthy of all acceptance*, and wait upon the performance of them, it is no other thing, but to make Christ welcome, to say, even so, Lord Jesus, I am content in my soul that thou be my Saviour, *To be found in thee not having my own righteousness*, I am well pleased to cast away my own as dung, and finds my self no other nor an ungodly man. Now it is certain that many souls that are still questioning whether they have Faith, yet do find this in their souls, but because they know not that it is Faith which they find, they go about to seek that which is not Faith, and where it is not to be found, and so disquiet themselves in vain, and hinders fruitfulness.

Now the Faith of a Christian is no fancy, it is no light vain imagination of the brain, but it dwells in the

the heart, with the heart man believes, and it dwells with love. Faith and Love, we need not be curious to distinguish them, it is certain that love is in it, and from it, it is in the very bosome of it, because Faith is a soul embracing of Christ, it is a choosing of him for its portion, and then upon the review of this goodly portion, and from consideration of what he is and hath done for us, the soul loves him still more, and is impatient of so much distance from him. We find them conjoynd in Scripture, but they are one in the heart: O that we studied to have these joyntly engraven on the heart, as they are joyned in the word, so our heart should be a living Epistle: Faith and love are two words, but one thing under different notions: they are the outgoings of the soul to Christ for life, the breathings of the soul after him, for more of him, when it hath once tasted how good he is: Faith is not a speculation, or a wandering thought of truth, its the truth not captivated into the mind, but dwelling in the heart, and getting possession of the whole man, you know a man and his will are one, not so a man and his mind, for he may conceive the truth of many things he loves not, but what ever a man loves, that and he in a manner becomes one with another: Love is unitive, it is the most excellent union of distant things. The will commands the whole man, and hath the office of applying all the faculties to their proper works, *Illā imperat aliā exequuntur*, therefor when once divine truth gets entry into the heart of a man, and becomes one with his will and affection, it will quickly command the whole man to practise and execute, and then he that received the truth in love, is found a walker in the truth: many persons captivate truth in their understandings, as the Gentiles did, they held or detained it in unrighteousnesse, but because it hath no liberty to descend into the heart, and possesse that Garison, it cannot command the man. But O its better to be truths captive, then to captivate truth, faith
the

the Apostle, ye obeyed from the heart the truth to which ye were delivered, Rom. 6. O a blessed captivity, be delivered over to truth, that is indeed freedom, G truth makes free, *Joh. 8.* And it makes free where there is in freedom, give it freedom to command thee, and It is it shall indeed deliver thee from all strange lords, and only thou shalt obey it from the heart, when it is indeed in the heart, when the truth of God, whether promises, or threatnings, or commands are impressed to thy heart, you shall find the expression of the truth in the conversation: Faith is not an empty assent to the truth, but a receiving of it in love, and when the truth is received in love, then it begins to work by love, *Faith works by love*, saith Paul, Gal. 5. 6. This now is the proper nature of its operation, which expresseth its own nature, obedience proceeding from love to God, flowes from Faith in God, and that sheweth the true and living nature of that Faith: If the soul within receive the Seal and impression of the truth of God, it will render the image of that same truth in all its actions.

Love is put for all obedience, it is made the very sum and compend of the Law, the fulfilling of it, for the truth is, it is the most effectual and constraining principle of obedience, and withall the most sweet and pleasant: *The love of Christ constrains us* to live to him, and not henceforth to our selves, 2 Cor. 5. 14. As I said, a man and his will is one, if you engage it, you bind all, if you gain it, it will bring all with it. As it is the most ready way to gain any party to engage their head whom they follow, and upon whom they depend; let a mans love be once gained to Christ, and the whole train of the souls faculties, of the outward senses, and operations will follow upon it: It was an excellent and pertinent question that Christ asked Peter, when he was going away, if Peter had considered Christs purpose in it, he would not have been so hasty and displeased, *Peter loves thou me*, then feed my sheep? If a man love Christ he will certainly study

study to please him, and though he should never do
 ty, so much in obedience, it is no pleasure except it be
 om, done out of love: O this, and more of this in the
 here heart, would make Ministers feed well, and teach well,
 ee, and would make people obey well: *If ye love me keep*
 ls, *my commands*: Love devotes and consecrates all that is
 inde in a man, to the pleasure of him whom he loves;
 er p therefore it fashions and conforms one even against
 fed nature to anothers humour and affection: it con-
 the strains not to live to our selves, but to him, its joy
 ent and delight is in him, and therefore all is given up and
 en resigned to him: Now as it is certain that if you
 rk love much you will do much, so it is certain, that
 The little is accepted for much, that proceeds from love,
 h er and therefore our poor maimed and halting obedience,
 from is called the *fulfilling of the Law*, he is well
 new pleased with it, because love is ill-pleased with it,
 e for love thinks nothing too much, all too little, and
 th of therefore his love thinks any thing from us much,
 in all since love would give more, he accepteth that which
 is given, the lovers mite cast into the treasure, is
 very more then ten times so much outward obedience
 , for from another man; He meets love with love, if the
 ning souls desire be towards the love of his name, if love
 vece offer though a farthing, his love receiving it, counts
 live it a Crown; love offering a present of duty, finds
 15 many imperfections in it, and covers any good that
 e it, is in it, seems not to regard it, and then behold as a re-
 it, compence; his love receiving the present from us,
 in covers a multitude of infirmities that are in it: And
 om thus what in the desire and endeavour of love on our
 ist, part, and what in the acceptation of what is done on
 the his part, love is the fulfilling of the Law. It is an
 ir: usuall proverb, *All things are as they are taken*, love
 ist is the fulfilling of the Law, because our loving Fa-
 ad ther takes it so, he takes as much delight in the poor
 ve childrens willingnesse, as in the more ageds strength,
 en the offer and endeavour of the one pleaseth him as
 ly well as the performance of the other.

The love of God is the fulfilling of the Law, for it is a living Law, it is the Law written on the heart, it is the Law of a Spirit of life within, *Quis legem det amantibus, major lex amor sibi ipsi est.* You almost need not prescribe any rules, or set over the head of love, the authority and pain of a command, for it is a greater Law to it self, it hath within its own bow some as deep an ingagement and obligation to any thing that may please God, as you can put upon it, for it is in it self the very ingagement and bond of the soul to him. This it is indeed which will do him service, and that is the service which he liketh: it is that only serves him constantly and pleasantly, and constantly it cannot serve him, which doth it not pleasantly, for it is delight only that makes it constant. Violent motions may be swift, but not durable, they last not long: fear and terrour is a kind of externall impulse, that may drive a soul swiftly to some duty, but because that is not one with the soul, it cannot endure long, it is not good company to the soul. But love making a duty pleasant, becomes one with the soul, it incorporateth with it, and becomes like its nature to it, that though it should not move so swiftly, yet it moves more constantly. And what is love but the very motion of the soul to God? and so till it have attained that, to be in him, it can find no place of rest. Now this is only the service that he is pleased with which comes from love, because he sees his own Image in it: for love in us, it is nothing else but the impression and stamp that Gods love to us makes on the heart, it is the very reflection of that sweet warm beam, so then when his love reflects back unto himself, carrying our heart and duty with it, he knoweth his own superscription, he loves his own Image in such a duty: *He that loveth me, and continueth in my love I will love him, and I and my Father will come and make our abode with him,* Joh. 14. 23. Here now is an evidence that he likes it, for he must needs like that place he chooseth

to dwell into, he who hath such a glorious Mansion, and Palace above, he must needs love that soul dearly that he will prefer it to his high and holy place.

Now I know it will be the secret question and complaint of some souls, How shal I get love to God? I cannot love him, my heart is so desparatly wicked, I cannot say as *Peter*, *Lord thou knowest that I love thee*. I shall not insist upon the discovery of your love unto you by marks and signs, only I say, if thou indeed from thy heart desires to love him, and are grieved that there is not this love in thy soul to him, which becomes so love-worthy a Saviour, then thou indeed lovest him, for he that loveth the love of God, loveth God himself: And wherefore art thou sad for want of that love, but because thou lovest him in some measure, and withall finds him beyond all that thou can think and love: But I say, that which most concerns thee is, to love still more, and that thou would be more earnest to love him, then to know that thou loves him.

Now I know no more effectual way to increase love to Jesus Christ, then to believe his love. Christ Jesus is the Author and Finisher both of Faith and Love, and we love him, because he first loved us. Therefore the right discovery of Jesus Christ, what he is, and what he hath done for sinners, is that which will of all things most prevail to ingage the soul unto him: But as long as ye suspend your Faith upon the being, or increase of your love and obedience (as the manner of too many is) you take even such a course as he that will not plant the Tree till he see the fruits of it; which is contrary to common sense and reason.

Since this then is the sum of true Religion, to believe in Christ, and to love him, and so live to him, we shall wind up all that is spoken, into that exhortation of the Apostles, *Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard*. You have this Doctrine of Faith and love delivered unto you, which may be able to

Iave your souls : then I beseech you hold them
 salvation is in them , they are sound words ,
 wholesome words, words of life, spirit and life
 Christ speaks) as well as words of Truth :
 how will you hold them fast that have them not
 all , that know them not though you hear them
 you who are ignorant of the Gospel, and hear not
 but a sound of words , instead of sound and whol-
 some words; how can you hold them fast? Can a
 hold the wind in the hollow of his hand, or keep
 a sound within it ; you know no more but a sound
 and a wind that passeth by your ear , without ob-
 vying either truth or life in it. But then again ,
 you who understood these sound words, and have a firm
 of knowledge , and of the Letter of the Law, what
 will that avail you? You cannot hold it fast except
 you have it within you , and it is within you indeed
 when it is in your heart , when the form
 it is ingraven upon the very soul in love. Not
 though you understand the sound of these words, and
 the sound of truth in them, yet you receive not the
 living Image of them, which is Faith and Love. Can you
 paint a sound , can you form it, or engrave it on any
 thing? Nay, but these sound words are more subst-
 rially and solid , they must be engraven on the heart
 else you will never hold them , they can be easily
 plucked out of thy mouth and hand, by temptation
 unlesse they be inclosed , and laid up in the secret
 of the heart, as *Mary* laid them. The truth must be
 held fast , or thou cannot hold it fast , it must ca-
 vate thee , and bind thee with the Golden Chain
 of affection , which only is true freedom, or certai-
 nly thou wilt let it go. Nay , you must not only have
 the truth received by love into your heart, but as
 the Apostle speaketh , you must also hold fast
 the form of sound words ; Scripture words , are
 sound and wholesome : There may be unsound words
 in expressing true matter , and if a man shall give

To believe in Christ, and to love him, &c. 75
erty to his own luxurant imagination, to expiate in
notions and expressions, either to catch the ear of
the vulgar, or to appear some new discoverer of light
and Gospel mysteries, he may as readily fall into er-
our and darknesse, as into truth and light. Some
men do busk up old truths, Scripture truths, into
some new dresse of language, and notions, and then
shewes them out for new discoveries, new lights, but
in so doing, they often hazard the losing of the truth
itself. We would beware and take heed of strange
words that have the least appearance of evill, such as
Christed, and Godded, let us think it enough to be wise
according to the Scriptures, and suspect all that as
vain, empty, unsound, that tends not to the increase
of Faith in Christ, and love and obedience unto him.
As ordinarily the Dialect of these called Antinomians
is, giving and not granting that they had no unsound
mind, yet I am sure they use unsound words to ex-
press sound matter; the cloaths should be shaped to
the person, truth is plain and simple, let words of
truth also be full of simplicity. I say no more, but
leave that upon you, that you hold fast even the ve-
ry words of the Scriptures, and be not bewitched by
the vain pretentions of Spirit, all Spirit, pure and spi-
rituall service, and such-like, to the casting off of the
word of truth, as Letter, as Flesh, and such is the
high attainment of some in these dayes, an high at-
tainment indeed, and a mighty progresse in the way to
destruction, the very last discovery of that Antichrist
and Man of Sin. Oh, make much of the Scripture,
for you shall neither read nor hear the like of it in the
world: Other Books may have sound matter, but
there is still something in manner or words unsound;
no man can speak to you truth in such plainnesse and
simplicity, in such soundnesse also. But here is both
sound matter, and sound words, the truth holden out
truly, health and salvation holden out in as wholesome
a manner as is possible. Matter and manner are both
divine.

Exod. 3. 13, 14. *When they shall say unto me
What is his Name? What shall I say?*
God said, **I AM THAT I AM.**

WE are now about this Question, *What God is?* But who can answer it, or answered, who can understand it? should astonish us in the very entrance to think that we are about to speak and to hear of Majesty, *Whom eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, hath it entered into the heart of any creature to consider what he is.* Think ye that blind men could have pertinent discourse of light and colours, would they form any suitable notion of that they had never seen and cannot be known but by seeing? What an ignorant speech would a deaf man make of sounds, which a man cannot so much as know what it is, but by hearing of it? How then can we speak of God who dwells in such inaccessible light, that though we have our eyes opened, yet they are far lesse proportioned to that resplendent brightnesse, then a blind eye is to the Suns light?

It useth to be a Question, *If there be a God, or how it may be known that there is a God?* It were almost blasphemy to move such a Question, if there were not so much atheism in the hearts of men, which makes us either to doubt, or not firmly to believe and seriously to consider it. But what may convince souls of the Divine Majesty? Truly I think if it be not evident by its own brightnesse, all the reason that can be brought, is but like a candles light to see the Sun by. Yet because of our weaknesse, the Lord shines upon us in the Creatures, as in a Glasse, and this is become the best way to take up the glorious brightnesse of his Majesty, by reflection in his Word and Works. God himself dwells in light inaccessible

that no man can approach unto ; if any look straight to that Sun of Righteousnesse, he shall be astonished and amazed , and see no more then in the very darknesse : But the best way to behold the Sun, is to look upon it in a Pale of Water , and the surest way to know God by, is to take him up in a state of humiliation and condescension, as the Sun in the Rainbow, in his Word and Works , which are the mirrours of his Divine Power and Goodnesse, and do reflect upon the hearts and eyes of all men, the Beams of that increased Light : If this be not the speech , that day uttereth unto day, and night unto night , one self-being gave me a being ; and if thou hear not that language that is gone out into all the earth , and be not, as it were, noised and possessed with all the sounds of every thing about thee, above thee , beneath thee , yea, and within thee , all singing a melodious song to that excellent Name which is above all names , and conspiring to give testimony to the fountain of their being ; If this I say, be not so sensible unto thee , as if a tongue and a voice were given to every creature to expresse it , then indeed we need not reason the business with thee that hath lost thy senses , do but I say, retire inwardly , and ask in sobriety and sadness, what thy conscience thinks of it ? and undoubtedly it shall confesse a Divine Majesty, at least , tremble at the apprehension of what it either will not confesse, or feebly believes : The very evidence of truth shall extort an acknowledgement from it. If any man denied the Divine Majesty, I would seek no other argument to perswade him , then what was used to convince an old Philosopher , who denied the fire, they put his hand in it till he found it , so I say , return within to thy own conscience , and thou shall find the scorching heat of that Divine Majesty burning it up whom thou would not confesse. There is an inward feeling and sense of God that is imprinted in every soul by nature , that leaves no man without such a testimony of God that makes him without ex-

cuse : there is no man so impious, so atheisticall, whether he will or not, he shall feel at some time that which he loves not to know or consider of, that what rest secure consciences have from the and terrour of God, it is like the sleep of a drunken man, who even when he sleeps does not rest quietly.

Now although this inward stamp of a Deity be graven on the mindes of all, and every creature without have some marks of his Glory stamped on them, so that all things a man can behold above him, about him, or beneath him, the most mean and inconsiderable creatures are pearles and transparent stones that casts abroad the rayes of that glorious brightness which shines on them, as if a man were inclosed to a city builded all of precious stones, that in the Sun-shine all and every parcell of it, the streets, the houses, the roofs, the windows, all of it, reflected to his eyes; those Sun-beams in such a manner, as if all had been one mirrour, though I say this be so, yet such is the blockishnesse and stupidity of men that they do not for all this consider of the glorious Creator, so that all these lamps seems to be lighted in vain, to shew forth his glory, which though they do every way display their beams upon us, that we can turn our eye no where, but such a ray shall penetrate it, yet we either do not consider it, or the consideration of it takes not such deep root as to lead home to God; therefore the Scripture calls all naturall men Atheists, *They have said in their hearts there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1. All men almost confess a God with their mouth, and think they believe in him, but alas, behold their actions and hearts, what testimony they give, for a mans walking and conversation is like an eye-witnesse, that one of them deserves more credit then ten ear witnesses of professions, *plus valet oculatus unus, quam auriori decem*. Now I may ask at you, what would ye do, how would ye walk if ye believed there were no God, would ye be more dissolute and profane, and more

void of Religion, would not humane Laws bind you as much in that case as they now do? For that is almost all the restraint that is upon many, the fear of temporal punishment, or shame among men; set your walking beside a heathens conversation, and save what you say ye believe in the true God, and he denies him, there is no difference, your transgressions speaks louder then your professions *that there is no fear of God before your eyes*, Psal. 36. 1. Your practice belies your profession, *You professe that you know God, but in works you deny him*, saith Paul, Tit. 1. 16. *Ore quod dicitis opere negatis*. In these words read in your audience, you have a strange question, and a strange answer; a question of *Moses*, and an answer of God: The occasion of it was the Lords giving to *Moses* a strange and uncouth Message, he was giving him Commission to go and speak to a King to dismisse and let go 600000. of his Subjects, and to speak to a numerous Nation, to depart from their own dwellings, and come out whether the Lord should lead them. Might not *Moses* then say within himself, Who am I, to speak such a thing to a King? Who am I, to lead out such a mighty people? Who will believe that thou hast sent me? Will not all men call me a deceiver, an Enthyfiasticall Fellow, that takes upon me such a thing? Well then, saith *Moses* to the Lord, Lord, when I shall say that the God of their fathers sent me, unto them, they will not believe me, they have now forgotten thy Majesty, and thinks that thou are but even like the vanities of the Nations, they cannot know their own portion from other Nations vain idols, which they have given the same name unto, and calls Gods as well as thou art called: Now therefore sayes he when they ask me what thy proper name is by which thou art distinguished from all idols, and all the works of thine own hands, and of mens hands, What shall I say unto them? Here is the Question, But why asks thou my Name; saith the Lord to Jacob, Gen. 32. 29. Importing that it is a high

high presumption, and bold curiositiy to search for a wonder; Ask not my name saith the Angel to *Moses*, for it is secret or wonderfull, *Judg.* 13. 18. It is a mystery, a dark hidden mystery, not for want of light, but for too much light it is a secret, it is wonderfull, out of the reach of all created capacity. *Thou shalt call his Name wonderfull*, *Isa.* 9. 6. What name can expresse that incomprehensible Majesty, the mind is more comprehensive then words, but the mind and soul is too narrow to conceive him, O the how short a garment must all words, the most significant and comprehensive and superlative words be. *Solomons* soul and heart was enlarged as the sand of the sea, but O its not large enough for the Creator of it. What is his Name, or what is his Sons Name, thou canst tell, *Prov.* 30. 4. The Lord himself cannot express it to our capacity, because we are not capable of what he can expresse, much lesse of what he is, if he should speak to us of himself as he is, O it should be dark sayings, hid from the understandings of all living, we could reach no more of it; but that it is a wonder, a secret: here is the highest attainment of our knowledge, to know there is some mystery in it, but not what that mystery is, Christ hath a Name above all names, how then can we know that name? It was well said by some of old, *Deus est Polynomos* and yet *Anonomos multorum nominum & tamen nullius nominis*, he hath all Names, and yet he hath no name: *quia est omnia & tamen nihil omnium*, because he is all in all, and yet none of all; *Deus est quod vides & quod non vides*; you may call him by all the works of his hands, for these are beams of his increated light, and streams of his inexhaustible sea of goodnesse, so that what ever perfection is in them, all that is eminently, yea, infinitely in him; Therefore saith Christ, *there is one God, even God*; and he calls himself the light, and life, and therefore you have so many Names of God in Scripture, there is no quality, no property or verue that hath the least shadow of goodnesse, but

but he is that essentially, really, eternally, and principally; So that the creature deserves not such names, but as they participat of his fulnesse, he is the true light, the true life, the Sun is not that true light, though it give light to the Moon, and to men, for it borrows its light and shining from him; all creatures are, and shine but by reflection; Therefore these names do agree to them but by a Metaphor (so to speak) the propriety and truth of them is in him, as it is but a borrowed kind of speech, to call a picture, or image, a man, only because of the representation and likeness to him, it communicates in one name with him: Even so (in some manner) the creatures are but some shadows, pictures, or resemblances and equivocall shapes of God, and what ever name they have, of good, wise, strong, beautifull, true, or such like, its but a borrowed speech from God, whose Image they have, and yet poor vain man would be wise, thought wise really, intrinsically in himself and properly, and calls himself so; which is as great an abuse of language, as if the picture should call it self a true and living man. But then as you may call him all things, because he is eminently and gloriously all that is in all, the fountain and end of all, yet we must again deny that he is any of these things, *unus omnia, & nihil omnium*; we can find no name to him, for what can ye call him, when you have said he is light? you can form no other notion of him but from the resemblance of this created light, but alas, that he is not, he so infinitely transcends that, and is distant from it, as if he had never made it according to his likeness; His Name is above all these names, but what it is himself knowes, and knowes only: If ye ask what he is, we may glance at some notions and expressions, to hold him out in relation to the creatures, we may call him Creator, Redeemer, Light, Life, Omnipotent, Good, Mercifull, Just, and such like: But if you ask what is his proper Name in relation to himself, *ipse novit*, himself knows that, we must be silent, and silence in such a subject is the rarest eloquence.

But

But let us hear what the Lord himself speaketh in answer to this question, if any can tell, sure he himself knows his own Name best; *I am* (saith he *what I am, sum qui sum*, go tell them that, *I am* hath sent thee: A strange Answer, but an answer only pertinent for such a Question: What should *Mose* make of this? What is he the wiser of his asking? Indeed he might be the wiser, it might teach him more by silence, then all humane eloquence could instruct him by speaking: His question was curious, and behold an answer short and dark to confound vain and presumptuous mortality. *I am what I am*, an answer that does not satisfie curiosity, for it leaves room for the first question, *and what art thou?* But abundant to silence faith and sobriety, that it shall ask no more, but sit down and wonder.

There are three things I conceive imported in this Name, Gods *unsearchableness*, Gods *unchangeableness*, and Gods *absolutenesse*. His *ineffability*, his *eternity*, and his *soveraignity*, and *independent subsistence*, upon whom all other things depend.

I say, 1. His *unsearchableness*, you know, it is our manner of speech when we would cover any thing from any, and not answer any thing distinctly to them, we say, it is what it is, I have said what I have said, I will not make you wise of it. Here then is the fittest notion you can take up God into, to find him unsearchable beyond all understanding, beyond all speaking; the more ye speak or think, to find him alwayes beyond what ye speak or think, what ever you discover of him, to conceive that infinitenesse is beyond that, *ad finem ejus per transiri non potest*, the end of which you cannot reach, that he is an unmeasurable depth, a boundlesse Ocean of perfection, that you can neither sound the bottom of it, nor find the breadth of it? Can a child wad the sea, or take it up in the hollow of its hand? when ever any thing of God is seen, he is seen a wonder, *wonderfull* is the Name he is known by: all our knowledge reacheth no further

Gods unsearchableness, and absolute perfection. 83
ther then admiration, *Who is like unto thee?* Exod.
15. 11. *Psal.* 89. 6, 7. and admiration speaks igno-
rance. The greatest attainment of knowledge reach-
eth but such a Question as this, *Who is like to thee?*
To know only that he is not like any other thing
that we know, but not to know what he is: And
the different degrees of knowledge is but in more ad-
miration or lesse at his unconceivablenesse, and in more
or lesse affection expressed in such pathetick Interro-
gations, *O who is like the Lord?* How excellent is
his Name? Here is the greatest degree of Saints
knowledge here-away, to ask with admiration and
affection such a Question, that no answer can be gi-
ven to, or none that we can conceive or understand,
so as to satisfie wondering, but such as still more in-
creaseth it. There is no other subject, but you may
exceed it in apprehensions, and in expressions: O how
often are mens songs and thoughts, and discourses
above the matter? But here is a subject that there
is no excessse into, nay, there is no accessse unto it, let
be excessse in it; imagination that can transcend the
created Heavens and Earth, and fancy to it self milli-
ons of new worlds, every one exceeding another, and
all of them exceeding this in perfection, yet it can
do nothing here, that which at one instant can passe
from the one end of heaven to the other, walk about
the circumference of the heavens, and travel over the
breadth of the sea, yet it can do nothing here. *Canst
thou by searching find out God?* Job 11. imagination
cannot travel in these bounds, for his center is every
where, and his circumference nowhere. An old Philo-
sopher speaks of God, *Deus est cuius centrum est ubique,
circumferentia nusquam*, how shall it then find him
out? There is nothing sure here but to lose our selves
in a mystery, and to follow his Majesty till we be
swallowed up with an *Ch altitudo*, O the depth, and
height, and length and breadth of God! O the depth
of his wisdom! O the height of his power! O the
breadth of his love! And O the length of his Eter-
nity!

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nity! Its not reason and disputation, saith Bernard
will comprehend these, but holinesse and that
stretching out the arms of fear and love, reverence,
and affection, What more dreadfull, then power that
cannot be resisted, and wisdom that none can be
from, and what more lovely then the love which
with he hath so loved us, and his unchangeableness
which admits of no suspicion? O fear him who hath
a hand that doth all, and an eye that beholds all things
and love him who hath so loved us, and cannot change
God hath been the subject of the discourses and
bates of men in all ages, but Oh, *Quam longe est*
rebus qui est tam Communis in vocibus? How little
portion hath men understood of him? How hath he
been hid from the eyes of all living. Every age
give this testimony of him, *We have heard of his fame*
but he is hid from the eyes of all living. I think the
Philosopher that took it to his advisement, said more
in silence then all men have done in speaking. *Sim*
nides being asked by *Hiero* a King, What God was
Sought a day to deliberate in, and think upon it, when
the King sought an account of his meditation about
it, he desired yet two dayes more, and so as oft as the
King asked him, he still doubled the number of the
dayes in which he might advise upon it, the King
wondering at this, asked what he meant by these day
layes? Saith he, *Quanto magis considero, tanto magis*
obscurior mihi videtur, the more I think on him, he
the more dark and unknown to me: This was more
reall knowledge then many subtile disputations
these men, who by their poor shell of finite capacities
and reason, presume to empty the ocean of Gods
finitesse, by finding out answers to all the objections
of carnal reason, against all these mysteries and
riddles of the Diety; I professe, I know nothing
satisfie reason in this businesse, but to lead it captive
to the obedience of Faith, and to silence it with the
faith of a mystery which we know not, *Pauls*
swer is one for all, and better then all the Syllogisms

Gods unsearchableness, and absolute perfection. 85
of such men, *What art thou O man who disputest? Dis-*
pute thou, I will believe. Ut intelligatur tacendum
it, silence only can get some account of God, quiet
and humble ignorance in the admiration of such a Ma-
jesty, is the profoundest knowledge. *Non est mirum si*
ignoretur, majoris esset admirationis si sciatur. It is no
wonder that God is not known, all the wonder were
to know and comprehend such a wonder, such a my-
stery; it is a wonder indeed, that he is not more
known, but when I say so, I mean that he is not
more wondered at, because he is passing knowledge.
If our eyes of flesh cannot see any thing almost when
they look straight and stedfastly upon the Sun, O
what can the eye of the soul behold when it is fixed
upon the consideration of that shining and glorious
majesty, will not that very light be as darknesse to it,
that it shall be as it were darkned and dazled with a
thick mist of light, in *superlucente caligine*, con-
founded with that resplendent darknesse. It is said,
that the Lord covers himself with light as with a gar-
ment, and yet clouds and darknesse are about him, and
he makes darknesse his covering, Psal. 18: 9, 10, 12.
His inaccessible light is this glorious darknesse that
strikes the eyes of men blind, as in the darknesse, the
sun's light is the night-owles night and darknesse,
when a soul can find no better way to know him by,
then by these names and notions by which we deny
our own knowledge, when it hath conceived all of
him it can, then as being overcome with that dazling
brightness of his glory, to think him inconceivable,
and to expresse him in such terms as withall expre-
sseth our ignorance: There is no name agrees more
to God, then that which saith we cannot name him,
we cannot know him, such as, *invisible, incomprehen-*
sible, infinite, &c. This Socrates an heathen, profest
to be all his knowledge, that he knew he did know
nothing, and therefore he preached an unknown god
to the Athenians, to whom after they erected an Altar
with that inscription, *To the unknown God.* I confesse
I indeed

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indeed the most part of our discourses, of our per-
formances, have such a writing on them, *to the*
known God, because we think we know him, and
we know nothing; But, O that Christians had
much knowledge of God, so much true wisdom,
solidly, and willingly to confesse in our souls
own ignorance of him, and then I would desire
other knowledge, and growing in the grace of God
but to grow more and more in the believing igno-
rance of such a mystery, in the knowledge of an un-
known, unconceivable, and unsearchable God, that
all the degrees of knowledge we might still conceive
we had found lesse, and that there is more to be found
then before we apprehended. This is the most per-
fect knowledge of God, that doth not drive away dark-
ness but increase it in the souls apprehension, any in-
crease in it doth not declare what God is, or satisfy
ones admiration in it, but rather shews him to be
more invisible and insearchable; so that the darkness
of a souls ignorance is more manifested by this light
and not more covered, and ones own knowledge
rather darkned and disappears in the glorious apper-
ance of this light, for in all new discoveries, there
is no other thing appears but that this which the
soul is seeking is supereminently unknown, and still
further from knowledge then ever it conceived it to
be: Therefore what ever you conceive or see of
God, if ye think ye know what ye conceive and see
its not God ye see, but something of Gods, lesse than
God, for it is said, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,
nor hath it entered into the heart of man to consider, what
he hath laid up for them that love him*: Now certainly
that's himself, he hath laid up for them; therefore
what ever thou conceive of him, and thinks now thou
knows him, this is not he, for he hath not entered
mans heart to conceive him: Therefore this must be
thy souls exercise and progresse in it, to remove all
things, all conceptions from him, as not becomming
his Majesty, and to go still forward in such a dark
negative

Gods unsearchableness, and absolute perfection. 87
negative discovery, till thou know not where to seek
him, nor find him next. *Si quis Deum, videat & in-*
telligat quod vidit Deum non vidit, if any see God,
and understand what they see, God they do not see,
for God hath no man seen, 1 Joh. 4. 12. And no man
knowes the Father but the Son, and none knows the Son
but the Father, its his own property to know him-
self, as to be himself, silent and seeing ignorance, is our
safest and highest knowledge.

Exod. 3. 14. *I AM THAT I AM.*
Psal. 19. 2. *Before the Mountains, &c.*
from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.
Job 11. 7, 8, 9. *Canst thou by searching*
find out God, &c.

THis is the chief point of saving knowledge,
to know God: And this is the first point
or degree of the true knowledge of God,
to discern how ignorant we are of him, and
find him beyond all knowledge: The Lord gives
a definition of himself, but such a one as is no more
clear then himself to our capacities, a short one in-
deed, and you may think it sayes not much, *I am*;
What is it that may not say so? *I am that I am*, the
least and most inconsiderable creature hath its own be-
ing, mens wisdom would have learned him to call
himself by some high stiles and titles, as the manner
and custome of Kings and Princes is, and such as the
flattery of men attributes unto them; you would
think the superlatives of wise, good, strong, excellent,
glorious, and such like, were more befeeming his Ma-
jesty, and yet there is more Majesty in the simple stile
then in all others, but a naturall man cannot behold
it, for it is spiritually discerned. *Let the pot-sheards*
of the earth (saith he) strive with the pot-sheards of
the

88 *Gods unsearchableness, and absolute perfection* God
the earth, Isa. 45. 9. But let them not strive with the
Marker. So I say, let creatures compare with crea-
tures, let them take superlative stiles, in regard
others, let some of them be called good, and so
better, in the comparison among themselves, but God
must not enter in the comparison. Paul thinks it
odious comparison, to compare present crosses
eternal Glory, I think them not worthy to be compared
faith Paul, Rom. 8. But how much more odious is
to compare God with creatures. Call him Highest
call him most Powerfull, call him most Excellent
Almighty, most Glorious in respect of Creature
you do but abase his Majesty, to bring it down to a
terms of comparison with them, which is beyond
the bounds of understanding; all these do but ex-
presse him to be in some degree eminently seated
above the creatures, as some creatures are above
others, so you do no more but make him the head
all, as some one creature is the head of one line
kind under it; but what is that to his Majesty? He
speaketh otherwise of himself, Isa. 40. 17. All Na-
tions are before him as nothing, and they are accounted
him lesse then nothing. Then certainly you have not
taken up the true notion of God, when you have
conceived him the most eminent of all beings, as long
as any being appears as a being in his sight, before
whom all beings conjoynd, are as nothing, while
you conceive God to be the best, you still attribute
something to the creature, for all Comparatives in-
cludes the Positive in both extreames; so then, you
take up only some different degrees between them
who differeth so infinitely, so incomprehensibly; the
distance betwixt Heaven and Earth is but a poor simi-
litude, to expresse the distance between God and
creatures; What is the distance betwixt a being and
nothing? Can you measure it? Can you imagine it?
Suppose you take the most high, and the most low
and measure the distance betwixt them, you do but
consider the difference betwixt two beings, but you
do

Gods unsearchablenesse, and absolute perfection. 89
do not expresse how far nothing is distant from any
of them : Now if any thing could be imagined lesse
then nothing, could you at all guesse at the vast di-
stance between it and a being ; Now so is it here, thus
saith the Lord, All Nations, their glory, perfection,
and number, all of them, and all their excellencies
united, do not amount to the value of an unity, in re-
gard of my Majesty ; all of them like Ciphers, joyn
ever so many of them together, they can never make
up a Number, they are nothing in this regard, and lesse
then nothing. So then, we ought thus to conceive
of God, and thus to attribute a being and life to him,
as in his sight, and in the consideration of it, all created
beings might evanish out of our sight, as the glorious
light of the Sun, though it do not annihilat the Stars
and make them nothing, yet it annihilats their ap-
pearance, to our senses, and makes them disappear, as
if they were not, although there be a great difference
and inequality of the Stars in the night, some lighter,
some darker, some of the first magnitude, and some of
the second and third, &c. some of greater glory,
and some of lesse : But in the day time all are alike, all
are darkned by the Suns glory ; even so it is here,
though we may compare one creature with another,
and find different degrees of perfection and excel-
lency, while we are only comparing them among
themselves ; but let once the glorious brightnesse of
God shine upon the soul, and in that light, all these
differences shall be obscured, all their differences un-
observed ; an Angel and a Man, a Man and a Worm differ
much in glory and perfection of being ; But O in his
presence there is no such reckoning, upon this account
all things are alike, God infinitely distant from all, and
so not more or lesse, infinitnesse is not capable of such
terms of comparison. This is the reason why Christ
saies, *There is none good, but one, even God.* Why ?
Because in respect of his goodnesse, nothing deserves
that name, lesser light in the view of the greater, is
darknesse, as lesse good in comparison of a greater,
appears.

90 Gods unsearchableness, and absolute perfection
appears evil, how much more then shall creatures
light and created goodnesse lose that name
notion in the presence of that uncreated light
self-sufficient goodnesse; And therefore it is that
Lord calls himself after this manner, *I am*, as if
thing else were, I will not say, saith he, that I
the highest, the best and most glorious that is, this
supposeth other things to have some being, and for
glory that is worthy the accounting of; *But I am*,
there is none else, I am alone, I lift up my hand to Heaven
and swear, I live for ever. There is nothing else
say, I am, I live, and there is none else; for there
nothing hath it of it self: Can any boast of that
which they have borrowed, and is not their own
As if the bird that had stollen from other birds
fair feathers, should come forth and contend with
them about beauty, would not they presently every
one pluck out their own? and leave her naked, to
an object of mockery to all, even so, since our breath
and being is in our nostrils, and that depends upon
Majesties breathing upon us, if he should but keep
his breath, as it were, we should evanish into nothing
he looketh upon man and he is not, *Job 7. 8.* That
strange look, that looks man not only out of counte-
enance, but out of life and being, he looks him into
his first nothing, and then can he say, I live, I am
no, he must alwayes say of himself in respect of God
as *Paul* of himself in respect of Christ, I live, yet not
I, but Christ in me, I am, yet not I, but God in me
I live, I am, yet not I, but in God, in whom I live, and
have my being. So that there is no other thing
side God can say, I am; because all things are but
borrowed drops of this self-sufficient fountain, and
sparkls of this primitive light; Let any thing inter-
veen between the stream and the fountain, and it
cut off and dried up; let any thing be interposed be-
tween the Sun and the Beam and it evanishes. There-
fore this fountain being, this original light, this self-
being *Auto on* as *Plato* calleth him, deserves only the
name

Gods Eternity and unchangeablenesse. 91

name of being, other things that we call after that name are nearer nothing then God, and so in regard of his Majesty may more fitly be called nothing then something, you see then how profound a myserie of Gods absolute self-sufficient perfection is infolded in these three letters, *I am*, or in these four, *Jehovah*, as the Original beareth; If you ask, what is God, there is nothing occurs better then this, *I am*, or *he that is*, if I should say he is the Almighty, the only wise, the most perfect, the most glorious, it is all contained in that word, *I am that I am*, *nempe hoc est esse, hac omnia esse*; For that is to be indeed, to be all those perfections simply, absolutely, and as it were solely, if I say all that, and should reckon out all the Scripture Epithets, I add nothing, if I say no more, I diminish nothing.

As this holds out Gods absolute perfection, so we told you that it imports his eternity and unchangeablenesse, you know *Pilats* speech, *What I have written I have written*, wherein he meant that he would not change it, it should stand so. So this properly belongs to Gods Eternity, *Before the mountains were brought forth, from everlasting to everlasting he is God*, *Psal. 90. 2*. Now this is properly to be, and this only deserves the name of being, which never was nothing, and never shall be nothing, which may alwayes say, *I am*, you know it is so with nothing else but God; the heavens and earth with the things therein, could not say 6000 years ago, *I am*. *Adam* could once have said, *I am*, but now he cannot say it; for that self-being and fountain-being hath said to him, return to dust, and so it is with all the generations past, where are they now? They were, but they are not; and we then were not, and now are, for we are come in their place, but within a little time, who of us can say, *I am*; No, we flee away and are like a dream, as when one awaketh: we are like a tale that is told, that makes a present noise, and it is past, within few years this generation will passe, and none will make

make mention of us, our place will not know us, more then we do now remember these who have been before: Christ said of *John he was a burning and shining light*, he was, saith he, but now he is not; but Christ may alwayes say, *I am the light and life of men*. Man is, but look a little backward, and he will not; you shall find his original; and step a little forward and he shall not be, you shall find his end, but God is *Alpha and Omega*, the beginning and the end, but oh, who can retire so far backward as to apprehend a beginning, or go such a start forward as conceive an end in such a being as is the beginning, and end of all things, but without all beginning and end? Whom understanding would it not confound? There is no way here but to flee into *Pauls Sanctuary, O the height and breadth, and depth*, we cannot imagine a being, but we must first conceive it nothing, and in some instance receiving its being; and therefore, *Canst thou by searching find out God?* Therefore what his being is, hath not entered into the heart of man to consider. If any man would live out the space but of two generations, he would be a worlds wonder; But if any had their dayes prolonged as the Patriarchs before the flood, they would be called ancient indeed, but then the heavens and earth are far more ancient; we may go backward the space of neer 6000. years in our own minds, and yet be as far from his beginning as we were, when we are come to the beginning of all things, a mans imagination may yet extend it self further, and suppose to it self as many thousands of years before the beginning of time, as all the Angels and men of all Nations, and generations from the beginning, if they had been employed in no other thing but this could have summed up; And then suppose a product to be made of all the several sums of years it would be vast and unspeakable, but yet your imagination could reach further, and multiply that great sum as often into it self as there are unities into it. Now when you have done all this, you are never

which

whit nearer the dayes of the ancient of dayes. Suppose then this should be the only exercise of men and Angels throughout all eternity, all this marvelous Arithmetick would not amount unto the least shadow of the continuance of him who is from everlasting; all that hudge product of all the multiplications of men and Angels, hath no proportion unto that never beginning, and never ending duration; The greatest sum that is imaginable hath a certain proportion to the least number, that it containeth it so oft and no oftner, so that the least number being multiplied, will amount unto the greatest that you can conceive. But, O where shal a soul find it self here? It is inclosed between infinitnesse before, and infinitnesse behind, between two everlastings, which way soever it turns, there is no out-going, which way soever it looks, it must lose it self in an infinitnesse round about it, it can find no beginning and no end, when it hath wearied it self in searching, which if it find not, it knows not what it is, and cannot tell what it is. Now what are we then? O what are we who so magnifie our selves? *We are but of yesterday, and know nothing*, Job 8, 9. Suppose that we had endured the space of a 1000. years, yet saith Moses, Psal. 90. 4 *A thousand years are but as yesterday in thy sight; Time hath no succession to thee, thou beholdest at once what is not at once, but in several times, all that hath not the proportion of one day to thy dayes: we change in our dayes, and are not that to day we were yesterday, but, He is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13. 8. Every day we are dying; some part of our life is taken away; we leave still one day more behind us, and what is behind us is gone and cannot be recovered: though we vainly please our selves in the number of our years, and the extent of our life, and the vicissitudes of time, yet the truth is, we are but still losing so much of our being: and time as passeth; first we lose our child-hood, then we lose our man-hood, and then we leave our old age

94 *Gods Eternity and unchangeableness.*

age behind us also, and there is no more before
 even the very present day we decide it with de
 but when he moves all things, he remains immovab
 though dayes and years be in a continuall flux
 motion about him, and they carry us down with th
 force, yet *He abides the same for ever*, even the ea
 that is established so sure, and the heavens that
 supposed to be incorruptible, yet *they wax old as*
a garment, but *he is the same*, and *his years have no*
 Psal. 102. 26, 27. *Sine principio principium, absque*
sine fine finis, cui prateritum non abiit, haud adit futurum
ante omnia, post omnia, totus unus ipse, He is the begi
 ning without any beginning, the end without an en
 there is nothing by-past to him, and nothing to com
sed uno mentis cernit in istu, quæ sunt, quæ fuerunt, quæ
fuerantque, He is one that is all, before all, after a
 and in all: He beholds out all the exalted and supe
 eminent tower of eternity, all the successions a
 changes of the creatures, and there is no successio
 no mutation in his knowledge, as in ours, *Known*
him are all his works from the beginning. He can d
 clare the end before the beginning, for he knows th
 end of all things, before he give them beginning
 Therefore he is never driven to any consultation upo
 any emergent or incident, as the wisest of men are
 who could not foresee all accidents and events, be
He is in one mind, saith *Job*, and that one mind a
 one purpose is one for all, one concerning all, He h
 it from everlasting, and who can turn him? for he w
accomplish what his soul desires.

Now, *Canst thou by searching find out God?* Can
 thou a poor mortall creature, either ascend up un
 the height of Heaven, or descend down into th
 depths of hell? Canst thou travel abroad, and co
 passe all the sea and dry land, by its longitude and
 titude? Would any mortal creature undertake su
 a voyage, to compass the Universe? Nay, not on
 so; but to search into every corner of it, above a
 below, on the right hand, and on the left; No c

ainly, unlesse we suppose a man whose head reaches into the height of heaven, and whose feet is down into the depths of hell, and whose arms stretched out, as far as the length of the earth, and breadth of the sea, unlesse I say, we suppose such a creature, when it is in vain to imagine, that either the height of the one, or the depth of the other, the length of the one, and the breadth of the other can be found out and measured: Now if mortall creatures cannot attain the measure of that which is finite, O then, what can a creature do, what can a creature know of him that is infinite, and the Maker of all these things, you cannot compass the sea and land, how then can a soul comprehend him, *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and the mountains he weighs in scales, and the hills in a ballance, Isa, 40. 12.* Thou cannot measure the circumference of the heaven, how then canst thou find him out, *who meted out the heavens with his span, and stretcheth them out as a curtain? Isa. 40. 12. 22.* You cannot number the Nations, or perceive the magnitude of the earth, and the huge extent of the heavens, What then canst thou know of him, *who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants are but as grasse-hoppers before him, and he spreadeth out the Heavens as a tent to dwell into? He made all the pins and stakes of this Tabernacle, and he fastned them below, but upon nothing, and stretcheth this Curtain about them, and above them; and it was not so much difficulty to him, as to you to draw the Curtain about your Bed, or he spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast.* Canst thou by searching find him out? And yet thou must search him, not so much out of curiosity to know what he is, for *he dwells in inaccessible light, which no man hath seen, and no man can see, 1 Tim. 6. 16.* Not so much to find him, as to be bound of him, or to find what we cannot know when we have found; *Hic est qui nunquam quari frustra potest,*

test, cum tamen inveniri non potest, you may seek him but though you never find him, yet ye shall not see him in vain, for ye shall find blessednesse in him. Though you find him, yet, can you search him unto perfection? Then what you have found were not God? How is it possible for such narrow hearts to frame an apprehension, or receive an impression of such an immense greatnesse, and eternal goodnesse. Will not a soul losse its power of thinking, and speaking, because there is so much to be thought and spoken; and it so transcends all that it can think or speak. Silence then must be the best Rhetorick, and the sweetest eloquence, when eloquence it self must become dumb and silent, it is the abundance and excess of that inaccessible light, that hath no proportion to our understandings, that strikes us as blind as in the darknesse the want of light: All that we can say of God is, that whatsoever we can think or conceive he is not that, because he hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, and that he is not like any of these things which we know, unto which, if he be not like, we cannot frame any similitude or likeness of him in our knowledge: What shall we then do? Seek him, and search him indeed, but if we cannot know him, to reverence and fear and adore what we know: so much of him may be known, as may teach us our duty, and show unto us our blessednesse. let then all our inquiries of him have a special relation to this end, that we may out of love and fear of such a glorious and good God, worship and serve him, and compose our selves according to his will, and wholly to his pleasure: What ever thou knows of God, or searcheth of him, it is but a vain speculation, and a work of curiosity, if it do not lead to this end, to frame and fashion thy soul to an union and communion with him in love; If it do not discover thy self unto thy self, that in that light of Gods glorious Majesty thou may distinctly behold thy own vilenesse and wretched misery, thy darknesse and

The true result of the right knowledge of God. 97
and deadnesse, and utter impotency. The Angels that
Isaiah saw attending God in the Temple, had wings
covering their faces, and wings covering their
feet, these excellent spirits who must cover
their feet from us, because we cannot behold
their glory, as *Moses* behoved to be veiled, yet they
cannot behold his glory, but must cover their face
from the radiant and shining brightnesse of his Maje-
sty, yet they have other two wings to flee with; and
being thus composed in reverence and fear to God,
they are ready to execute his commands willingly
and swiftly, *Isa. 6. 1, 2, 3, &c.* But what is the use
Isaiah maketh of all this glorious sight? *Wo is me, I*
am a man of polluted lips, &c. Oh, all is unclean, People
and Pastor: He had known, doubtlesse, something of
it before, but now he sees it of new, as if he had ne-
ver seen it; the glory of God shining on him, doth
not puffe him up in arrogancy and conceit of the
knowledge of such profound mysteries, but he is
more abated in himself by it, it shines into his heart,
and whole man, and lets him see all unclean, within
and without, and so it was with *Job*, *Job 42, 5, 6.*
I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but as
long as it was here-say, I thought my self something;
I often reflected upon my self and actions, with a
kind of self complacency and delight: But now, saith
he, since I have seen thee by the seeing of the eye, I ab-
hor my self in dust and ashes, I cannot look upon my
self with patience, without abhorrency and detesta-
tion; self-love made me loath other mens sins more
then mine own, and self-love did cover mine own sins
from me, it presented me to my self in a feigned like-
nesse, but now I see my self in my true shape, and
all coverings striped off, thy light have peirced in
to my soul, and behold, I cannot endure to look upon
my self: Here now is the true knowledge of Gods
Majesty, which discovers within thee a mystery of
iniquity; and here is the knowledge of God indeed,
which abaseth all things beside God, not only in opi-
nion,

98 *The true result of the right knowledge of God*
nion, but in affection, that attracts and unites the
soul to God, and draws it from thy self and all creature
things, this is a right discovery of divine purity and
glory, that spots even the cleanness of Angels, and
stains the pride of all glory, much more will it show
present filthiness as filthiness, without a covering.
Its knowledge and science (falsely so called) that puffeth
up, for true knowledge emptieth a soul of itself,
self, and humbleth a soul in it self, that it may be full
of God. He that thinketh he knows any thing, knoweth
nothing as he ought to know.

This then is the first property or mark of saving
knowledge of God, it removeth all grounds of vain
confidence, that a soul cannot trust unto it self; and
then the very proper intent of it is, that a soul may
trust in God, and depend on him in all things: for
this purpose the Lord hath called himself by so many
names in Scripture, answerable to our several neces-
sities and difficulties, that he might make known to us
how all-sufficient he is, that so we may turn our eyes
and hearts towards him: This was the intent of this
name, *I am*, that *Moses* might have a support of his
Faith, for if he had looked to outward appearance,
was it not almost a ridiculous thing, and like a vain
fancy, for a poor inconsiderable man to go to a King
with such a message, that he would dismiss so many
subjects, and was it not an attempt of some mad man
to go about to lead so many thousands from a wicked
tyrannicall King, into another nation. Well saith
the Lord, *I am*, I who give all things a being, will
give a being to my promise, I will make *Pharaoh*
hearken and the people obey. Well then what is it
that this name of God will not answer? It is a creat-
ing name, a name that can bring all things out of no-
thing by a word, if he be such as he is, then he can
make of us what he pleaseth. If our souls had this
name constantly engraven on our hearts, O what
power would divine promises and threatnings have
with us? *I, even I, am he that comforteth thee*, saith
he,

The true result of the right knowledge of God. 99
he, if we believed that it were he indeed, the Lord
Jehovah, how would we be comforted? How would
we praise him by his name *JAH*? How would we
stoup unto him, and submit unto his blessed will, if
we believed this, would we not be as dependent on
him as if we had no being in our own selves? Would
we not make him our habitation and dwelling place,
and conclude our own stability, and the stability of
his Church from his unvariable eternity, as the Psal-
mist, *Psal.* 90. 1. and *Psal.* 102. at the end: how can
we think of such a fountain-being, but we must with-
all acknowledge our selves to be shadows of his
goodnesse, and that we owe to him what we are,
and so consecrate and dedicate our selves to his glory?
How can we consider such a self-being, independent
and creating goodnesse, but we must have some de-
sire to cleave to him, and some confidence to trust in
him? Now this is to know him. When we think on
his unchangeablenesse, let us consider our own vanity
whose glory and perfection is like a summer flower,
or like a vapour ascending for a very little time,
whose best estate is altogether vanity: our purposes
are soon broken off, and made of none effect, our re-
solutions change, this is a character of Mortality,
we are not alwayes alike, *non sibi constare nec ubique
& semper sibi parem eundemque esse.* To be now one
thing, and then another thing is a property of sinfull
and wretched man; Therefore let us cease from man
whose breath is in his nostrils, and not trust in Princes
who shall die, far lesse in our selves who are lesse then
the least of men. But let us put our trust in God,
who changeth not, and we shall not be consumed;
our waters shall not fail, we shall never be ashamed
of any hope we have in him. There is nothing else
you trust in, but undoubredly it shall prove your
shame and confusion: in sum, what ever you hear or
know of God, know that it is vain and empty, un-
lesse it descend down into the heart to fashion it to
his fear and love, and extend unto the outward man

to conform it to obedience, you are but vain in your imaginations, and your foolish hearts are darkened, when you know God, you glorifie him not as God, if that be not the fruit and end of knowledge, that knowledge shall be worse to thee then ignorance, for both it brings on iudiciall hardning here, and will be the solemn accuser and witnesse against thee hereafter. *Rom. 1. 21. 24.* The knowledge of Jesus Christ truly so called, is neither barren nor unfruitfull, for out of its root and sap springs out humility, self abasing, confidence in God, patience in tribulations, meeknesse in provocations, temperance and sobriety in lawfull things, &c. *2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7, 8.*

Exod. 34. 5, 6, 7, 8. The Lord, The Lord God, mercifull and gracious, &c.

THere is nothing can separate between God and a people, but iniquity, and yet he is very loath to separate, even for that, he makes many shewes of departing, that some may hold him fast, and indeed he is not difficult to be holden. He threatens often to remove his presence from a person, or Nation, and he threatens that he may not indeed remove, but that they may intreat him to stay, and he is not hard to be intreated: who is a God like unto him, slow to anger and of great mercy? He is long of being provoked, and not long provoked, for it is like the anger of a Parents Love: Love takes on anger as the last remedy, and if it prevail, it is as glad to put it off, as it was unwilling to take it on. You may see a lively picture of this in Gods dealing with *Moses* and this people, in the preceeding Chapter. He had long endured this rebellious and obstinate people, had often threatened to cut them off, and yet, as it were, loath to do it, and repenting of it, he suffers himself to be entreated

treated for them, but all in vain to them, they corrupted their way still more: And in the 32. Chap. falls in grosse idolatry, the great trespasse that he had given them so solemn warning of often, whereupon great wrath is conceived. And the Lord Chap. 33. I threatneth to depart from them, go your way, saith he, to Canaan, but I will not go with you; take your venture of any judgements, and the people of the Lands cruelty: here is a sad farewell to Israel, and who would think he could be detained after all that? Who would think that he could be entreated? And yet he is not entreated, he is not requested before he give some ground of it, and before he first condescends, go, saith he, and put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee. Will he then accept a repenting people, and is there yet hope of mercy? Should he that is going away, shew us the way to keep him still? And he that flees from us, will he strengthen us to pursue and follow after him? This is not after the manner of men, it is true, whose compassions fails, when their passion ariseth, but this is the manner and method of grace; or of him who waits to be gracious, he flees so as he would have a follower, yea, while he seems to go away, he draws the soul, that it may run after him: hence is that word, *Psal. 63. 8. My soul follows hard after thee, thy right hand upholds me.* Well, the people mourns and puts off their ornaments in sign of humiliation and abasement, but all this doth not pacifie and quench the flame that was kindled: *Moses* takes the Tabernacle out of the Camp, the place of judgement where God spake with the people, and the cloud, the signe of Gods presence removes: in a word, the signs of Gods loving and kind presence departs from them, to signifie that they were divorced from God, and in a manner, the Lord by *Moses*, excommunicateth all the People, and Rulers both; and draweth away these holy things from the contagion of a profane people: But yet all is not gone, he goes far off

but,

102 *How loath God is to depart from, &c.*
but not out of sight, that you may alwayes follow
him, and if you follow, he will stand still; he is
ever without the reach of crying, though we do
perceive him. Now in this sad case you may have
triall who is godly: every one that seeks the Lord
will separate from the unholy congregation, and
low the Tabernacle; And this affecteth the people
much, that they all worship in the tent doors. Now
in the mean time, God admits *Moses* to speak with
him; though he will not speak to the people, yet
he will speak with their Mediator, a typicall Me-
diator; to shew us that God is well pleased in Christ
and so all Christs intercessions and requests for us will
get a hearing, when they are come once in talking
the businesse is taken up, for he is not soon angry,
and never implacably angry, slow to anger, and keeps
it not long; *Moses* falling familiar with God, not only
obtains his request for the people, but becomes more
bold in a request for his own satisfaction and confir-
mation: he could not endure to lead that people, ex-
cept God went with him, and having the promise of
his going with them, he cannot endure distance with
him, but aspires to the nearest Communion that may
be: Oh, that it were so with us. His great request
is, that the Lord would show him his glory, had he
not seen much of this already? And more then any
man ever saw, when he spake in the Mount with
God, &c. Nay, but he would see more, for there is
alwayes more to be seen, and there is in a godly soul
alwayes more desire to see it, the more is seen, the
more is loved and desired, tasting of it only begets
a kindly appetite after it, and the more tasted, still
the fresher and more recent; But yet it is above both
desire and fruition, thou cannot see my face, &c.
All our knowledge of God, all our attainments of
experience of him, do reach but to some dark and
confused apprehension of what he is, the clearest
and nearest sight of God in the world, is, as if a man
were not known but by his back, which is a great
point

point of estrangement : it is said , in heaven we shall see him face to face, and fully as he is, because then the soul is made capable of it.

Two things in us here puts us in an incapacity of nearness with God , infirmity and iniquity ; infirmity in us cannot behold his glory , its of so weak eyes that the brightness of the Sun would strike it blind, and iniquity in us , he cannot behold it , because he is of pure eyes, that can look on no unclean thing : its the only thing in the Creation that Gods holiness hath antipathy at , and therefore he is still about the destroying of the body of sin in us , about the purging from all filthiness of flesh and spirit , and till the soul be thus purged of all sin , by the operation of the holy Ghost , it cannot be a Temple for an immediate vision of him , and an immediate exhibition of God to us : Sin is the wall of partition, and the thick cloud that eclipses his glory from us : its the opposite Hemisphere of darkness contrary to light , according to the access or recess of Gods presence , it is more or less dark , the more sin reign in thee . the less of God is in thee , and the more sin be subdued , the readier and nearer is Gods presence : but let us comfort our selves , that one day shall put off both infirmity and iniquity , mortality shall put on immortality , and corruption be cloathed with incorruption ; we shall leave the rags of mortal weakness in the grave , and our menstruous cloaths of sin behind us, and then shall the weak eyes of flesh be made like Eagles-eyes, to behold the Sun , and then shall the soul be cloathed with holiness , as with a Garment, which God shall delight to look upon, because he sees his own image in that glasse.

We come to the Lords satisfying of *Moses* desire, and proclaiming his Name before him ; it is himself only can tell you what he is , it is not Ministers preaching , or others discourse , can proclaim that Name to you, we may indeed speak over these words unto you , but it is the Lord that must write that Name

Name upon your heart, he only can discover his mystery to your spirit: there is a spirit of life which cannot be inclosed in letters and syllables, or transmitted through your ears into your hearts, but he himself must create it inwardly, and stir up the inward sense and feeling of that Name, of these Attributes; Faith indeed comes by hearing, and our knowledge in this life is through a glasse, darkly, thorough ordinances and senses, but there must be an inward teaching and speaking to your souls, to make that effectually, *The anointing teacheth you all things*, 1 Joh. 2. 27. Also it is the separation of that from the word that makes it so unprofitable, if the Spirit of God were inwardly writing what the word is teaching, then should your souls be living Epistles, that ye might read Gods Name on them: O be much in employing it, and depending on him that teacheth to profit, who only can declare unto your souls what he is.

These names expresseth his essence or being, and his properties, what he is in himself, and what he is to us; in himself, he is *Jehovah*, or, a self being, *Auto on*, as we heard in the 3. Chap. *I am that I am*, and *E L* a strong God, or almighty God, which two hold out to us the absolute incomprehensible perfection of God, eminently and infinitely enclosing within himself all the perfections of the creatures, the unchangeable and mutable being of God, who was, and is, and is to come, without succession, without variation, or shadow of turning, and then the Almighty power of God, by which, without difficulty, by the inclination and beck of his will and pleasure, he can make or unmake all, create, or annihilate, to whom nothing is impossible; which three, if they were pondered by us, till our souls received the stamp of them, they would certainly be powerful to abstract and draw our hearts from the vain, changeable, and empty shadow of the creature, and gather our scattered affections that are parted among them, because

The insufficiency of all things beside God. 105
of their insufficiency, that all might unite in one, and
joyn with this self-sufficient and eternal God; I say,
if a soul did indeed believe and consider, how all-suf-
ficient he is, how insufficient all things else are, would
it not cleave to him, and draw near to him, *Psal. 73.*
at the end. It is the very torment and vexation of
the soul to be thus racked, distracted, and divided
about many things; and therefore many, because
none of them can supply all our wants, our wants
are infinite, our desires are insatiable, and the good
that is in any thing is limited and bounded, it can
serve but for one use, and another for another use,
and when all are together, they can but supply some
wants, but they leave much of the soul empty: But
often these outward things crosses one another and
cannot consist together, and hence ariseth much strife
and debate in a soul, his need requireth both, and
both will not agree: But O that you could see this
one universal good, one for all, and above all, your
souls would choose him certainly, your souls would
trust in him, ye would say, *Ashur shall not save*
us, we will not ride on horses: creatures shall not satis-
fie us, we will seek our happinesse in thee, and no
where else, since we have tasted this new wine, away
with the old, the new is better. I beseech you, make
God your friend, for he is a great one, whether he
be a friend or an enemy, he hath two properties that
make him either most comfortable, or most terrible,
according as he is at peace or war with souls. *Eter-*
nity, and Omnipotency. You are all once enemies to
him. O consider what a party you have, an Almight-
ty Party, and an unchangeable Party, and if you will
make peace with him, and that in Christ, then know
he is the best friend in the world, because he is un-
changeable and Almighty, if he be thy friend, he will
do all for thee he can do, and thou hast need of:
But many friends, willing to do, yet have not ability,
but he hath power to do what he will and pleaseth;
many friends are changeable, their affections dryeth
up,

106 *Gods manifesting of himself to sinners,*
up, or themselves die, and therefore even Prince of
friendship is but a vain confidence, for they shall die
and then their thoughts of favour perish with them
but he abides the same for all generations, there is no
end of his duration, and no end of his affection; he
can still say, *I am that I am*, what I was, I am
and I will be, what I am, men cannot say so, the
are like the Brooks that the companies of Ten
looked after, and thought to have found them in Sum
mer, as they left them in Winter; but behold they
were dried up: and the companies ashamed. God
cannot make thee ashamed of thy hope, because he
is faithfull and able, ability and fidelity is a firm
Anchor to hold by in all storms and tempests.

Such is God in himself, now there are two man
ner of wayes he vents himself towards the creature
in a comfortable way, or in a terrible way. The
glorious perfection and Almighty power hath
issue upon sinners, and it runs in a twofold channel
of mercy or justice; of mercy towards miserable
sinners that finds themselves lost, and flee unto him
and take hold of his strength, and justice towards
those that flatter themselves in their own eyes, and
continue in their sins and put the evill day far off.
There is no mercy for such as fear not justice, and
there is no justice for such as flee from it in to mercy.
The Lord exhibits himself in a two-fold appearance
according to the condition of sinners; He sitteth on
a Throne and Tribunal of grace and mercy, to make
accesse to the vilest sinner who is afraid of his wrath
and would fain be at peace with him, and he sits on
a Throne of justice and wrath, to seclude and debar
presumptuous sinners from his Holinesse. There
were two mountains under the Law, one of cursings,
another of blessings, these are the mountains God
sets his Throne upon, and from these he speaks, and
sentences mankind: from the mountain of cursings,
he hath pronounced a curse & condemnatory sentence
upon all flesh, *for all have sinned*, therefore he con
cludes

is either in a way of justice, or mercy. 107

cludes all under sin, that all flesh might stop their mouth, and the whole world become guilty before God. Now the Lord having thus condemned all mankind because of disobedience, He sits again upon the mountain of blessings, and pronounces a sentence of absolution, of as many as have taken with the sentence of condemnation, and appealed to his grace and mercy, and these who do not so; the sentence of condemnation stands above their head unrepealed. He erecteth his Tribunal of justice in the Word for this end, that all flesh might once be convicted before him, and therefore he cites as it were, and summons all men to sift themselves and compear before his Tribunal to be judged; he layeth out an accusation in the Word against them, he taketh their consciences witnesse of the truth of all that is charged on them, and then pronounces that sentence in their conscience, *Cursed is he that abides not in all things,* which the conscience subsums, and concludes it self accursed, and subscribes to the equity of the sentence, and thus the man is guilty before God, and his mouth stopped, he hath no excuses, no pretences, he can see no way to escape from justice, and God is justified by this means, in his speaking and judging, *Psal. 51. 4.* The soul ratifies and confirms the truth and justice of all his threatnings and judgements, *Rom. 3. 4.* Now for such souls as joyn with God in judging and condemning themselves, the Lord hath erected a Throne of grace, and Tribunal of mercy in the word, whereupon he hath set his Son Jesus Christ, *Psal. 2. 6* and *89. 14.* and *45. 6.* *Heb. 1. 8.* And O this Throne is a comfortable Throne, mercy and truth goes before the face of the King to welcome and intertain miserable sinners, and to make accessse to them. And from this Throne Jesus Christ holds out the Scepter of the Gospel to invite sinners, self-condemned sinners, to come to him alone who hath gotten all finall judgement committed to him, that *he may give eternal life to whom he will,* *Joh. 5. 21. 22.* O that is a sweet and ample

108 *The right consideration of Gods Name;*
ample commillion given to our friend and brother
Jesus Christ, power to repeal sentences past against
us, power to loose them whom justice hath bound,
power and authority to absolve them whom justice
hath condemned, and to blesse them whom the Law
hath cursed, and to open their mouth to praise, whose
mouth sin and guiltinesse hath stopped, power to
give the answer of a good conscience, to thy
self-tormenting conscience, in a word, he hath power
to give life, to make alive and heal these who are
killed or wounded by the Commandment. Now
say, seeing God hath of purpose established this
Throne of mercy in the Word, thou mayest wait
after receiving and acknowledging of the justice
the curse of the Law, appeal to divine mercy and
grace, sitting on another Throne of the Gospel
thou may; if thy conscience urge thee to despair
and to conclude there is no hope, thou may, I
appeal from thy conscience, from Satan, from justice
unto Jesus Christ, who is holding out the Scepter
to thee; the Minister calls thee, rise and come, stand
no longer before that Bar, for it is a subordinate
judicatory, there is a way to redresse thee by a higher
court of grace, thou may say to justice, to Satan,
thy own conscience, it is true, I confesse that I de-
serve that sentence, I am guilty and can say nothing
against it, while I stand alone, but though I cannot
satisfie, and have not, yet there is one Jesus Christ
who gave his life a rancome for many, and whom
God hath given as a propitiation for sins, he hath
satisfied and payed the debt in my name, go and
present the Cautioneer since he hath undertaken
for me, he hath done it and is absolved. Thou had him
in thy hands; O justice, thou had him prisoner under
the power of death, since you have let him go, thou
he is acquitted from all the charge of my sins, and
therefore since I know that he is now a King, and hath
a Throne to judge the world, and plead the cause
of his poor sheep, I will appeal to him, refer the cause

will produce confidence in him.

109

to his dicision, I will make my supplication to him, and certainly he will hear, and interpose himself between wrath and me, he will rescinde his sentence of condemnation, since he himself was condemned for us, and is justified, *It is Christ that died, nay, rather is risen again, who shall condemn me? He is that justifieth me*, Rom. 8. 33. 34. Now if thou do indeed flee into him for refuge, that City is open for thee, and nothing to prejudice thy entry: but no curse, no condemnation can enter in it, Rom. 8. 1. He will justify and absolve thee from all things whereof the law could not justifie thee but condemn thee, *There is forgiveness with him that he may be feared*. David may teach thee this manner of appellation, Psal. 130. and 142. 2. of appealing from the deserved curse to free undeserved blessing and mercy in Christ.

Let us consider this Name of the Lord, and it shall answer all our suspicions of him, all our objections against coming to him, and believing in him, it is certain, ignorance is the mother of unbelick, together with the natural perversnesse of our hearts, if we knew his Name we would trust in him; if his names were pondered and considered, we would believe in him. Satan knows this, and therefore his great might and cunning is, to hold our minds fixed on the consideration of our misery and desparate estate, he keeps thee a wakened conscience still upon that comfortlesse sight, and he laboures to represent God by halves, and that is a false representation of God, he represents him as cloathed with justice and vengeance, as a consuming fire, in which light a soul can see nothing but desparation written; and he labours to hold out the thoughts of his mercy and grace, or diverts a soul from the consideration of his promises; whence it comes that they are not established, and though salvation be near, yet it is far from them in their sense and apprehension: therefore, I say, you would labour to get an intire sight of God, and you shall see him best in his Word, there he reveals himself,

L

110 *The right consideration of Gods Name*
self, and there you find, if ye consider that wh
may make you fear him indeed, but never flee fr
him, that which may abase you, but withall imbu
den you to come to him, though trembling, wh
ever thought possesse thee of thine own misery,
thy own guiltinesse, labour to counterpoise th
with a thought of his mercy and free promises, wh
ever be suggested of his holinesse and Justice, he
himself speak out his own Name, and thou shal ha
as much of mercy and grace, as may make these m
terrible unto thee, though high and honourable
The Lord hath so framed the exprenion and procl
mation of his Name in this place, that first a wo
of Majesty and power is premised, (*The Lord, T
Lord God*) that it may compose our hearts in fe
and reverence of such a glorious one, and make
preparatory imprefion of the Majesty of our Go
which indeed is the foundation of all true Faith,
begins to adore and admire a Deity, a Majesty h
from the world, the thoughts of his power an
glory possesseth the soul first, and maketh it begi
to tremble to think that it hath such a high and hol
one to deal with.

But in the next place, you have the most sweet a
luring, comforting files that can be imagined to mee
with the trembling and languishing condition of
soul that would be ready to faint before such a Ma
jesty; here mercy takes it by the hand, and gives
cordial of *grace, pardon, forgivenesse, &c.* to it
which revives the soul of the humble, and inter
mingleth some rejoycing with the former tremb
ling. Majesty and grearnesse goes before to abas
and humble the soul in its own eyes, and mercy an
goodnesse seconds them, to lift up these who ar
low, and exalt the humble, and in the description of
this, the Lord spends moe words, according to the
necessity of a soul, to signifie to us how great and
strong consolation may be grounded on his Name,
how accessible he is, though he dwell in accessible
light,

will produce confidence in him.

III

light, how lovely is he though he be the high and the lofty one; how good is he, though he be great, how merciful he is, though he be majestic; In a word, that these that flee to him may have all invitation, all encouragement to come, and nothing to discourage, to prejudice their welcome, that who ever will, may come, and nothing may hinder on his part. And then after all this, he subjoynes a word of his justice, in avenging sin, to shew us that he leaves that as the last, that he assaies all gaining wayes of mercy with us, and that he is not very much delighted with the death of sinners, that so who ever perishes may blame themselves for hating their own salvation, and forsaking their own mercy.

Now whoever thou art that apprehends a dreadful and terrible God, and thy self a miserable and wretched sinner, thou canst find no comfort in Gods highnesse and power, but it looks terrible upon thee, because thou doubts of his good-will to save and pardon thee: Thou sayest with the blind man, if thou wilt thou can do it; thou art a strong God: but what comfort can I have in thy strength, since I know not thy good-will? I say, the Lord answers thee in this name, I am *mercifull*, saith the Lord, if thou be miserable; I am *merciful* as well as strong, if thou have sin and misery, I have compassion and pity; my mercy may be a cobby and patern to all men to learn it of me, even towards their own brethren, *Luk. 6. 26.* Therefore he is called the *Father of mercies*, *2 Cor. 1. 3. Misericors est cui alterius miseria cordi est.* Mercy hath its very name from misery, for it is no other thing then to lay anothers misery to heart, not to despise it, nor to add to it, but to help it, its a strong inclination to succour the misery of sinners, therefore thou needs no other thing to commend thee to him. Art thou miserable, and knows it indeed? Then he is merciful, and know that also, these two suit well.

Nay, but faith the convinced soul, I know not if he will be merciful to me, for what am I? There is nothing in me to be regarded, I have nothing to procure favour, and all that may procure hatred, but faith the Lord, *I am gracious*, and dispenses mercy freely, without respect to condition or qualification, say not, if I had such a measure of humiliation as such a one, if I loved him so much, if I had so much godly sorrow and repentance, then, I think he would be mercifull to me. Say not so, for behold he is gracious, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and there is no other cause, no motive to procure it, it comes from within his own breast. It is not thy repentance will make him love thee, nor thy hardnesse of heart will make him hate thee, nor obstruct the vent of his grace towards thee: no, if it be grace, it is no more of works, no works in that way that thou imagines, it is not of repentance, nor of faith, in that sense thou conceivest, but it is freely, without the hire, without the price of repentance, or faith, because all those are but the free gifts of grace, thou would have these graces to procure his favour, and to make them the ground of thy believing in his promises, but grace is without money, it immediatly contracts with discovered misery, so that if thou do discover in thy self misery and sin, though thou find nothing else, yet do not cast away confidence, but so much the more addresse thy self to mercy and grace which doth not seek repentance in thee, but brings repentance and faith with them unto thee, yet there is some hink in the awakened conscience; I have gone on long in sin, I have been a presumptuous sinner, can he endure me longer? Well, here what the Lord saith, *I am long suffering and patient*, and if he had not been so, we had been damned ere now, patience hath a long terme, and we cannot out-run it, out-weary it. Why do we not wonder that he presently and instantly executed his wrath on Angels, and gave them not one hours space for

for repentance, but cast them down headlong into destruction, as in a moment; and yet his Majesty hath so long delayed the execution of our sentence, and calls us to repentance and forgiveness, that we may escape the condemnation of Angels: his patience is not slackness and negligence as men counts it, 2 Pet. 3. 9. He sits not in heaven as an idol and idle spectator of what men are doing; but he observes all wrongs, and is sensible of them also; and if we were minifull and sensible of them also, he would forget them, he is *long-suffering*: this is extended and stretched out patience beyond all expectation, beyond all deserving, yea contrary to it. Therefore as long as he forbears, if thou apprehend thy misery and sin, and continuance in it, do not conclude that it is desperate, *Why should a living man complain.* As long as patience lengthens thy life, if thou desire to come to him, believe he will accept thee.

But saith the doubting soul, I am exceeding perverse and wicked, there is nothing in me but wickedness, it so abounds in me that there is nothing in me but wickedness, it so abounds in me that there is none like me, but saith the Lord, *I am abundant in goodness.* Thy wickedness though it be great, it is but a created wickedness, but my goodness is the goodness of God; I am as abundant in grace and goodness as thou art in sin, nay, infinitely more, thy sin is but the transgression of a finite creature, but my mercy is the compassion of an infinite God, it can swallow it up, suppose thy sin cry up to Heaven, yet mercy reacheth above Heaven and is built up for ever. Here is an invitation to all sinners to come and taste, O come and taste and see how good the Lord is, goodness is communicative, it diffuses it self, like the Sns light. There is riches of his goodness, Rom. 2. 4. Poor soul thou cannot spend it though thou have many wants.

But I am full of doubtings, fears and jealousies, I cannot believe in his promises, I often question them,

114 Gods Name sufficient to answer all, &c.
how then will he perform them? I say, (saith the Lord) *I am abundant in truth*, he will certainly perform, shall our unbelief or doubting, make the faith of God of none effect, &c. Rom. 3. 3. God forbids, his faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds, he will keep Covenant with thee, whose soul hath chosen him, though thou often question and doubt of him. Indeed thou would not give indulgence to thy doubtings and jealousies, but look on them as high provocations, for what can be more grievous to fervent love, then to meet with jealousy, jealousy would quench any creatures love, but though it grieve and provoke him, yet he will not change, he will not diminish his, only do not think your disputings, and quarrellings innocent and harmless things, no certainly, they grieve the spirit, stirreth up the beloved to go away, as it were, before he please, and makes thee walk without comfort, and without fruit; yet he will bear with and quench the smoking flax of a believers desires, though they do not arise to the flame of assurance.

But the wounded spirit hath one or two burdens more: I have abused much mercy, how can mercy pity me? I have turned grace into wantonnesse, so that when I look to mercy and grace to comfort me, they do rather challenge me, the sins of none are like mine, none of such a hainous presumptuous nature; But let us hear what God the Lord speaks, *I keep mercy for thousands, and forgive iniquity, transgression and sin*; thou hast wasted much mercy, but more is behind, all the treasure is not spent, though there were many thousand worlds beside, I could pardon them all, if they would flee into my mercy, thou shalt not be straitned in me, mercy will pardon, thy abuse of mercy will forgive all faults thou dost against it self. Thou that sins against the son of man, the Redeemer of the world, and remedy of sin, yet there is pardon for thee, what ever the quality, condition, or circumstance of thy sin be; who ever con-
vinced.

vinced of it, and loadned with it, desires rest to thy soul, thou may find it in Christ whose former kindnesse thou hast answered with contempt, many sins, many great sins, and these presumptuous sins cannot exclude, nay, no sin can exclude a willing soul. Unbelief keeps thee unwilling, and so excludes thee.

Now as the spider sucks poison out of the sweetest flower, so the most part of souls suck nothing but delusion and presumption and hardening out of the Gospel: many souls reasons for more liberty to sin from mercy; but behold how the Lord backs it with a dreadfull word, *Who will by no means clear the guilty.* As many as do not condemn themselves, and judge themselves before his Tribunal of justice, there is no rescinding of the condemnatory sentence, but it stands above your heads, *He that believes not is condemned already.* Justice hath condemned all by a sentence, he that doth not in the sense of this flee into Jesus Christ from sin and wrath, is already condemned, his sentence is standing, there needs no new one since he flees not to mercy for absolution, the sentence of condemnation stands unrepealed. You guilty souls who clear your selves, God will not clear you, and alas, how many of you do clear your selves? Do ye not extenuate and mince your sins. How hard is it to extort any confession of guilt out of you, but in the general? If we condescend to particulars, many of you will plead innocency almost in every thing, though you have like children learned to speak these words, *that ye are sinners*, I beseech you consider it, it is no light matter, for *God will by no means clear the guilty*, by no means, by no intreaties, no flatteries; what? will he not pardon sin? Yes indeed, his Name tells you he will pardon all kind of sins, and absolve all manner of guilty persons, but yet such as do condemn themselves, such as are guilty in their own conscience, and their mouths stopped before God, you who do not enter in the serious examination of your wayes, and do not arraign your selves

selves before Gods Tribunal daily, till you find yourselves loathsome and desparate, and no refuge for you; you who do flatter your selves alwayes in the hope of Heaven, and put the fear of hell alwayes from you, I say, God will by no means, no prayers, no intreaties clear or pardon you, because you come not to Jesus Christ, *In whom is preached forgiveness and remission of sins.* You who take liberty to sin, because God is gracious, and delay repentance till the end, because God is long suffering, know God will not clear you, he is holy and just as he is mercifull. If his mercy make thee not fear and tremble before him, and do not separate thee from thy sins; if remission of sins be not the strongest perswasion to thy soul of the removing of sin. Certainly thou dost in vain presume upon his mercy. Now consider what influence all this glorious proclamation had on *Moses*, it stirreth up in him reverence and affection, reverence to such a glorious Majesty, and great desire to have him amongst them, and to be more one with him: If thy soul rightly discover God, it cannot but abase thee, he made haste to bow down and worship. O Gods Majesty is a surprizing and astonishing thing, it would bow thy soul in the dust if it were represented to thee, labour to keep the right and intire representation of God in thy sight, his whole Name, *Strong, Mercifull and Just; Great, Good and Holy.* I say, keep both in thy view, for half representations are dangerous, either to beget presumption and security, when thou looks on mercy alone, or despair, when thou looks on justice, and power alone; let thy soul consider all joyntly, that it may receive a mixed impression of all, and this is the holy composition and temper of a believer, rejoyce with trembling, love with fear; let all thy discoveries of him aim at more union and communion with him; such a self-sufficient all-sufficient and eternal being.

Joh. 4. 24. *God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

WE have here something of the nature of God pointed out to us, and something of our duty towards him, *God is a spirit*, that is his nature; and *man must worship him*, that is his duty, and that *in spirit and in truth*, that is the right manner of the duty: if these three were well pondered till they did sink into the bottom of our spirits, they would make us indeed Christians, not in the letter, but in the spirit: That is presupposed to all Christian worship and walking, to know what God is; its indeed the *Primo-cognitum* of Christianity, the first principle of true Religion, the very root out of which springs and grows up, walking suitably with, and worshipping answerably of a known God. I fear much of our Religion be like the *Athenians*, they builded an Altar to an unknown God, and like the *Samaritans*, who worshipped they knew not what. Such a worship, I know not what it is, when the God worshipped is not known. The two Parents of true Religion are, the knowledge of God and of our selves, this indeed is the beginning of the fear of God, which the wise Preacher calls the beginning of true wisdom: And these two, as they beget true Religion, so they cannot truly be one without the other: It is not many notions and speculations about the divine nature, it is not high and strained conceptions of God, that comprises the true knowledge of him, many think they know something, when they can speak of these mysteries in some singular way, and in some terms removed from common understandings, which neither themselves nor others know what they mean; and thus

118 *God is a Spirit, and what that doth impo*
thus they are presumptuous, self-conceited, kno
ing nothing as they ought to know; There
knowledge that puffs up, and there is a knowle
that casts down, a knowledge in many that doth
swell them, not grow them; its but a rumor full
wind, a vain and empty frothy knowledge, that
neither good for edifying others, nor saving a m
self, a knowledge that a man knows and reflects up
so, as to ascend upon the height of it, and meas
himself by the degrees of it; This is not the tr
knowledge of God, which knows not it self, loo
not back upon it self, but straight towards God,
holinesse and glory, and our basenesse and misery
and therefore it constrains the soul to be ashamed
it self in such a glorious presence, and to make ha
to worship, as *Moses, Job, Isaiah*, did.

This definition of God, if we did truely unde
stand it, we could not but worship him in anothe
manner, *God is a Spirit*; Many ignorant people for
in their own mind some likenesse and Image of Go
who is invisible, you know how ye fancy to you
selves some bodily shape when you conceive of him
you think he is some reverend and Majestick person
sitting on a Throne in Heaven; But I beseech yo
correct your mistakes of him, there is outward Ido
latry, and there is inward, there is idolatry in action
when men paint or engrave some similitude of God
and there is ~~idol~~atry in imagination, when the fanc
and apprehension runs upon some image, or likeness
of God; The first is among Papists, but I fear th
latter be too common among us, and it is indeed al
on, to form such a similitude in our mind, and to
engrave or paint it without; so that the God whom
many of us worship, is not the living and true God,
but a painted or graven idol. When God appeared
most visible to the world, as at the giving out of
the Law, yet no man did see any likenesse at all, he
did not come under the perception of the most sub
tile sense, he could not be perceived but by the retired
under

God is a Spirit, and what that doth import. 119
understanding, going aside from all things visible, and
therefore you do but fancy an idol to yourselves in
stead of God, when you apprehend him under the
likenesse of any visible or sensible thing, and so what
ever love, or fear, or reverence you have, it
is all but mispent superstition, the love and fear of
an idol.

I. Know then, that God is a Spirit, and therefore
he is like none of all these things you see, or hear,
or smell, or taste, or touch: The heavens are glori-
ous indeed, the light is full of glory, but he is not
like that. If all your senses should make an inquiry
and search for him throughout the world, you should
not find him, though he be near hand every one of us,
yet your eyes, and ears, and all your senses, might tra-
vel the length of the earth, and breadth of the sea,
and should not find him, even as you might search
all the corners of heaven ere you could hear or see
an Angel; if you saw a man asunder, and resolve him in
atomes of dust, yet you could not perceive a soul
within him, why? Because these are spirits and so
without the reach of your senses.

II. If God be a spirit, then he is invisible, and
dwells in light inaccessible, which no man hath seen
or can see, then our poor narrow minds that are
drowned, as it were, and immersed into bodies of
clay, and in this state of mortality, receives all know-
ledge by the senses, cannot frame any suitable notion
of his spiritual and abstracted nature; We cannot
conceive what our soul is, but by some sensible ope-
ration flowing from it, and the height that our know-
ledge of that noble part of our selves amounts to,
is but this dark and confused conception, that the
soul is some inward principle of life, and sense and
reason; how then is it possible for us to conceive
aright of the divine nature, as it is in it self? but
only in a dark and general way, we guesse at his Ma-
jesty, by the glorious emanations of his power and
wisdom, and the rayes thereof which he displayes
abroad

120 *God is a Spirit, and what that doth import* Go
abroad in all the works of his hands, and from
these concurring testimonies and evidences of his Ma
jesty, we gather this confused notion of him, that
he is the fountain-self-independent-being, the origi
nal of all these things, and more absolute in the work
then the soul is in the body, the true *Anima mundi* spi
the very life and the light of men, and the soul that co
quickens, moves and forms all this visible world, and
that makes all things visible, and himself invisible di
Therefore it is that the Lord speaks to us in Scrip
ture of himself, according to our capacities, of his fa
face, his right hand and arm, his Throne, his Scepter, a
his back parts, his anger, his fury, his repentance, his
grief and sorrow; none of which are properly his
his spiritual, immortal and unchangeable nature, but
because our dulnesse and slownesse is such in appreh
ending things spiritual, it being almost without
the sphere and comprehension of the soul while in
the body, which is almost addicted unto the senses
of the body; Therefore the Lord accomodates him
self unto our terms and notions; *balbutit nobiscum* ha
he like a kind father stammers with his stammering
children, speaks to them in their own dialect; but
withall would have us conceive he is not really such
a one, but infinitely removed in his own being from
all these imperfections. So when you hear of these
terms in Scripture, O beware ye conceive God to be
such a one as your selves, but in these expressions not
becoming his Majesty, because below him; leave
your own ignorance of his glorious Majesty, your
dulnesse and incapacity to be such, as the holy one
must come down, as it were, in some bodily
appearance, ere you can understand any thing
him.

III. If God be a spirit, then he is most perfect
and most powerfull, all imperfection, all infirmity
and weaknesse in the creature is founded in the gross
and material part of it, you see the more matter
and bodily substance be in any thing, it is the more
lumpish

God is a Spirit, and what doth that import? 121
lumpish, heavy and void of all action, it is the more
spiritual, pure, and refined part of the creation, that
hath most activity in it, and is the principle of all
motions and actions; You see a little flie hath more
action in it then a great mountain, because there are
spirits in it which move it. The bottom of the world
contains the dregs of the Creation, as it were, a masse
and lump of heavy earth, but the higher and more
distant bodies be from that, the more pure and sub-
till they are; and the more pure and subtrill they be,
the more action, vertue, and efficacy they have: the
earth stands like a dead lump, but the sea moves, and
the air being thinner and purer then both, moveth
more easily and swiftly: but go up higher, and still
the motion is swifter, and the vertue and influence
is the more powerfull: what is a dead body when
the soul and spirit is out of it? It hath no more
vertue nor efficacy, then so much clay, although by
the presence of the spirit of it, it was active, agile,
swift, strong, and nimble: so much then as any thing
hath of spirit in it, so much the more perfect and
powerfull it is. Then, I beseech you consider what a
one the God of the spirits of all flesh must be, the
very fountain-spirit, the self-being-spirit. When
the soul of a man, or the spirit of a horse, hath so
much vertue, to stir up a lump of earth, and to
quicken it to many diverse operations, even though
that soul and spirit did not, nay, could not make that
pece of earth they dwell into, then, what must his
power and vertue be, that made all those things?
Who gave power and vertue, even to the spirits of
all flesh; *Their horses saith God, are flesh, and not spi-*
rit, Isai. 30. Because in comparison of his Majesty,
the very spirits in them are but like a dead lump of
flesh; If he should draw in his breath (as it were)
they would have no more vertue to save the *Isra-*
elites, nor so many lumps of flesh or clay, for he is
the spirit of all spirits, that quickens, actuats, and
moves them to their several operations and influ-
encies.

122 *God is a Spirit, and what doth that imp*
encies. *Anima mundi, & anima animarum* m
an Angel hath more power then all men united in
body, Sathan is called *the Prince of the air*, and
of this world, for he hath more efficacy and ver
to commove the air, and raise tempests, then all
swarms of multiplied mankind, though gathered
one army, if the Lord did not restrain and limite
power, he were able to destroy whole nations
once; an Angel killed many thousands of *Senacher*
army in one night, what would many Angels do
if the Lord pleased to apply them to that wo
O what is man that he should magnifie himself, or gl
in strength or skill? Beasts are stronger then m
but mens weaker strength, being strengthened w
more skill, proves stronger then they; but
respect of Angels he hath neither strength
wiildom.

I V. If God be a Spirit, then he is not circumsc
ed by any place; and if an infinite Spirit, then h
every where, no place can include him, and no bo
can exclude him, he is within all things, yet
included nor bounded within them, and he is wi
out all things, yet not excluded from them: *In*
omnia, non tamen inclusus in illis, extra omnia nec
men exclusus ab illis. You know every body hath
own bounds and limits circumscribed to it, and sho
out all other bodily things out of the same space,
that before the least body want some space, it v
put all the universe in motion, and make every th
about it to change its place, and possesse anothe
but a spirit can passe through all of them, a
never disturb them; A legion may be in one m
and have room enough, if there were a wall of bra
or tower, having no open neither above, or bene
no body could enter, but by breaking thorow
making a breach into it, but an Angel or spirit co
storm it without a breach, and peirce thorow
without any division of it, how much more doth
maker of all spirits fill all in all, the thicknesse

God is a Spirit, and what doth that import. 123
The Earth doth not keep him out, nor the largeness
of the Heaven contain him: How then do we cir-
umscribe and limite him within the bounds of a pub-
lick house, or the Heavens? O how narrow thoughts
have we of his immense greatness? Who without
division or multiplication of himself, fills all the cor-
ners of the world, whose indivisible unity is equi-
valent to an infinite extension and divisibility; how
often I pray you, do you reflect upon this, *God is
near hand every one of us*; who of us thinks of a di-
vine Majesty nearer us than our very souls and consci-
ences, *In whom we live, and move, and have our being*?
How is it we move, and think not with wonder of
that first mover, in whom we move? How is it we
live and persevere in being, and do not alwayes con-
sider this fountain-being, in whom we live and have
our being? O the atheisme of many souls professing
God; we do speak, walk, eat and drink, and go about
our businesses, as if we were self-being, indepen-
dent of any, never thinking of that all-present quick-
ning spirit, that acts us, moves us, speaks in us,
makes us to walk, and eat and drink, as the barba-
rous people, who see, hear, speak, and reason, and
never once reflect upon the principle of all these, to
discern a soul within. This is brutish, and in this,
man who was made of a straight countenance to look
upward to God, and to know himself and his Maker,
if he might be differenced from all creatures below, is
degenerated and become like the beasts that perish:
Who of us believes this all-present God, we ima-
gine that he is shut up in heaven, and takes not such
notice of affairs below; but certainly he is not so far
from us: though he show more of his glory above,
yet he is as present and observant below.

V. If he be a spirit, then as he is incomprehensible
and immense in being, so also there is no compre-
hension of his knowledge. The nearer any creature
come to the nature of a spirit, the more knowing
and understanding it is, life is the most excellent
being,

124 *God is a Spirit, and what that doth impo*
being, and understanding is the most excellent
Materia est imers & mortua, the nearer any thing
to the earthly matter; as it hath lesse action, so lesse
life and feeling; Man is nearer an Angel then bea
and therefore he hath a knowing understanding spi
in him. There is a spirit in man, and the more
lesse this spirit of man is abstracted from sensual
material things, it lives the more excellent and po
life, and is, as it were, more or lesse delivered fro
the chains of the body. These souls that have new
risen above, and retired from sensible things, O how
narrow are they, how captivated within the pris
of the flesh; But when the Lord Jesus comes to
free, he delivers a soul from this bondage, he ma
these chains fall off, and leadeth the soul apart to co
verse with God himself, and to meditate on thin
not seen, sin, wrath, Hell and Heaven, and the fu
ther it goes from it self, and the more abstracted
is from the consideration of present things, the mo
it lives a life like Angels; And therefore when th
soul is separated from the body, it is then perfect
free, and hath the largest extent of knowledge;
mans soul must be almost like *Pauls* (*whether out*
the body or in the body, I know not) if he would u
derstand aright spiritual things: now then this inf
nite spirit, is an all-knowing spirit, all-seeing spirit
as well as all-present; *There is no searching of his u*
derstanding, Isa. 40. 28. and Psal. 147. 5. Who hath
revelled this Spirit, or being his counsellour hath taught
him? Rom. 11. 34. and 40. 13. He calls the gen
rations from the beginning, and known to him are
his works from the beginning. O that you would
alwayes set this God before you, or rather set yo
selves alwayes in his presence, in whose sight yo
are alwayes: How would it compose our hearts
reverence and fear in all our actions, if we did
deed believe that the Judge of all the world is
eye-witnesse to our most retired and secret thought
and doings? If any man were as privie to th
thought

God is a Spirit, and what that doth import. 125
thoughts as thy own spirit and conscience, thou
would blush and be ashamed before him; if every
one of us could open a window into one anothers
spirits, I think this assembly should dismisse as quick-
ly, as that of Christs, when he bade them that were
without sin, cast a stone at the woman, we could not
look one upon another: O then, why are we so little
apprehensive of the all-searching eye of God, who
can even declare to us our thoughts before it be?
How much atheisme is rooted into the heart of the
most holy? We do not alwayes meditate with *Da-
vid*, *Psal. 139.* on that all-searching and all-knowing
spirit, *who knows our down-sitting and up rising, and
understands our thoughts a far off, and who is acquainted
with all our wayes.* O how would we ponder our
path, and examine our words, and consider our
thoughts before hand, if we set our selves in the
view of such a spirit that is within us, and without
us, before us, and behind us. He may spare sinners as
long as he pleases, for there is no escaping from him;
you cannot go out of his dominions, nay, you cannot
run out of his presence, *Psal. 7. 8, 9.* he can reach
you when he pleaseth, therefore he may delay as long
as he pleaseth.

Joh. 4. 23. GOD is a Spirit, &c.

THere are two common notions engraven on
the hearts of all men by nature, that God
is, and that he must be worshipped; and
these two live and die together, they are
clear, or blotted together, according as the appre-
hension of God is clear, and distinct, and more deeply
engraven on the soul, so is this notion of mans duty,
of worshipping God clear and imprinted on the soul,
and when ever the actions of men do prove, that the

126 *The distinct knowledge that God is,*
conception of the worship of God is obliterated
worn out, when ever their transgressions do with
that a man hath not a lively notion of this duty
Gods worship; that doth also prove that the
notion of a God-head is worn out and cancelled in
soul; for how could souls conceive of God as he is
deed, but they must needs with *Moses*, *Exod.*
make haste to pray and worship: It is the principle
the very law of nature, which shall make the whole
world inexcusable, *Because that when they knew God*
they glorified him not as God. A Father must have hon-
our, and a Master must have fear, and God who is
the common Parent and absolute Master of all, must
have worship, in which, reverence and fear, mixed
with rejoycing and affection predomineth; It is sup-
posed and put beyond all question that it must be
he that worships him, &c. It is not simply said, *God*
is a Spirit and must be worshipped; no, for none can
doubt of it. If God be, then certainly worship is
due to him, for who is so worshipfull? And be-
cause it is so beyond all question; therefore woe to
the irreligious world that never puts it in practice.
O what excuse can you have, who have not so much
as a form of Godlinesse? Do you not know that it is
beyond all controversie that God must be worshipped?
Why then do you deny it in your practice, which
all men must confesse in their conscience? Is not he
God the Lord, a living and self-being Spirit? Then
must he not have worshippers? Beasts are not creat-
ed for it, it is you, O sons of men, whom he made
for his own praise, and it is not more suitable to
your natures, then it is honourable and glorious.
This is the great dignity and excellency you are pri-
viledged with beyond the brute beasts, to have spi-
rits within you capable of knowing and acknowledge-
ing the God of your spirits: why then do you both
rob and spoil God of his Glory, and cast away your
own excellency? Why do you love to trample on
your ornaments and wallow in the puddle like beasts
void

that he is to be worshipped are inseparable. 127

void of Religion, but so much worse then beasts, that you ought to be better, and were created for a more noble designe. O base spirited wretches, who hang down your souls to this earth, and followeth the dictates of your own sense and lust, and have not so much as an external form of worshipping God, how far are you come short of the noble designe of your creation, and the high end of your immortal souls: if you will not worship God, know, he will have worshippers, certainly he will not want them, because he hath designed so many souls to stand before him and worship him, and that number will not fail: He might indeed have wanted worshippers; for what advantage is it to him? But in this he declares his love and respect to man, that he will not want honour and service from him, it is rather to put honour upon him, and to make him blessed and happy, then for any gain can amount to him by it, for this is indeed the true honour and happinesse of man not to be worshipped and served of other fellow creatures, but to worship and serve the Creator: This is the highest advancement of a soul, to ly low before him, and to obey him, and have our service accepted of his Majesty; I beseech you strive about this noble service, since he must have worshippers. O say within your souls I must be one, if he had but one, I could not be content if I were not that one, since the Father is *seeking worshippers*, vers. 23. O let him find thee, offer thy self to him, saying, Lord, here am I. Should he seek you, who can have no advantage from you? Should he go about so earnestly a search for true worshippers, who can have no profit by them? And why do ye not seek him, since to you all the gain and profit redounds? Shal he seek you to make you happy, and why do ye not seek him and happiness in him? It is your own service, I may truly say, and not his so much; for in serving him thou dost rather serve thy self, for all the benefite redounds to thy self, though thou must not intend
such

128 *The distinct knowledge that God is,*
such an end, to serve him for your self, but for
names sake; else thou shalt neither honour him
advantage thy self. I pray you let him not see
vain, for in these afflictions, he is seeking wor-
shippers, and if he find you, you are found and saved
indeed. Do not then forsake your own mercy to
from him who follows you with Salvation.

As none can be ignorant that God is, and must
worshipped, so it is unknown to the world in what
manner he must be worshipped; the most part
men have some form in worshipping God, and
please themselves in it so well that they think God
is well pleased with it, but few there are who know
indeed what it is to worship him in a manner accep-
table to his Majesty: Now you know it is all
not to worship him at all, as not to worship him
that way he likes to be worshipped. Therefore the
most part of men are but self-worshippers, because
they please none but themselves in it, it is not the
worship his soul hath chosen, but their own inven-
tion, for you must take this as an undeniable ground
that God must be worshipped according to his own
will and pleasure, and not according to your humors
or invention, therefore his soul abhors wil-worship
devised by men out of ignorant zeal or superstition
though there might seem much devotion in it, and
much affection to God, as in the *Israelites* sacrifice
their children, what more seeming self-deniall? And
yet what more real self-idolatry? God owns not such
a service, for it is not service and obedience to his
will and pleasure, but to mens own will and humors
therefore a man must not look for a reward, but
from himself. Now it is not only wil-worship
when the matter and substance of the worship is not
commanded of God, but also when a commanded
worship is not discharged in the appointed manner
therefore, O how few true worshippers will the
Father find? True worship must have *truth*, for
the substance and *Spirit*, for the manner of it, etc.

and not according to our inventions. 129

It is not such a worship as the father seeks and will be pleased with; divine worship must have *truth* in it, that is plain, but what was that *truth*, it must be conformed to the rule and patern of worship, which is Gods will and pleasure, revealed in the word of *truth*, true worship is the very practice of the word of *truth*; it carrieth the image and superscription of a command upon it, which is a necessary ingredient in it, and constituent of it. Therefore if thy service have the image of thy own will stamped on it, it is not divine worship, but will-worship. Thus all humane ceremonies and ordinances enjoyned for service of God, carry the inscription not of God, but of man, who is the author and original of them, and so are but adulterated and false Coyn, that will not passe current with God, I fear there be many rites and vain customs among ignorant people, in which they place some Religion which have no ground in the word of God, but are only old wives fables and traditions. How many things of that nature are used upon a Religious account, in which God hath placed no Religion: Many have a superstitious conceit of the publick place of worship, as if there were more holinesse in it then in any other house: and so they think their prayers in the Church are more acceptable then in their chamber; But Christ refutes that superstitious opinion of places, and so consequently of dayes, meats, and all such external things: The Jews had a great opinion of their Temple, the Samaritans of their Mountain, as if these places had sanctified their services: but saith our Lord, *vers. 21. The hour cometh when ye shall neither worship in this mountain, &c.* but its any where acceptable, if so be ye worship in spirit and truth: many of you account it Religion to pray, and mutter words of your own in the time of publick prayer, but who hath required this at your hand? If ye would pray your selves, go apart, *shut the door behind thee*, saith Christ: private prayer should be in private,

130 *God must be worshipped according to his*
private, and secret, but when publick prayer is, your
heart should close with the petitions, and offer them
up joyntly to God, it is certainly a great sleight
that deceitfull destroyer, the devil to possesse your
minds with an opinion of Religion, in such vain
blings, that he might withdraw both your ears and
your hearts from the publick worship of God, when
every one is busied with his own prayers, you
cannot at all joyn in the publick service of God
which is offered up in your name; The like I may
say of stupid forms of prayer, and tying your selves
to a plate form, written in a book, or to some cer-
tain words gotten by the heart, who hath comman-
ded this? Sure not the Lord, who hath promised his
spirit to teach them to pray, and help their infir-
mities, who know not how, nor what to pray, it is
device of your own, invented by Satan to quench
the spirit of supplications, which should be the very
natural breathing of a Christian. But there are some
so grossely ignorant of what prayer is, that they
make use of the ten Commandments and Belief, as
prayer: so void are they of the knowledge and spirit
of God, that they cannot discern betwixt Gods com-
mands to themselves and their own requests to God
betwixt his speaking to men, and their speaking to
him, between their professing of him before men
and praying and confessing to him, all this is but
forged imaginary worship, worship falsely so called
which the Father seeks not, and receives not.

But what if I should say that the most part of your
worship, even that which is commanded of God, as
prayer, hearing, reading, &c. hath no truth in it, I
should say nothing amisse, for though you do those
things that are commanded, without any respect to
divine appointment, and only because you have re-
ceived them as traditions from your fathers, and be-
cause ye are taught so by the precepts of men, and
are accustomed so to do, therefore the stamp of Gods
will and pleasure is not engraven on them, but of
your

will, and not according to their invention. 131
your own will, or of the will of men; Let me pose
your Consciences, many of you, what difference is
there between your praying and your plowing, be-
tween your hearing, and your harrowing, between
your reading in the Scriptures, and your reaping in
the Harvest, between your religious service and your
common ordinary actions; I say, what difference is
there in the rise of these? You do many civil things
out of custome, or because of the precepts of men;
and is there any other principle at the bottom of
your religious performances? Do you at all consi-
der, these are divine appointments, these have a
stamp of his authority on them, and from the con-
science of such an immediate command of God, and
the desire to please him and obey him; do you go
about these? I fear many cannot say it: O, I am sure
all cannot, though it may be, all will say it: There-
fore your religious worship can come in no other ac-
count then wil-worship, or man-worship, it hath
not the stamp of truth on it, an expresse conformitie
to the truth of God as his truth.

But we must presse this out a little more. Truth
is opposed to ceremonie and shadow. The ceremo-
nies of old were shadows, or the external bodie of
Religion, in which the soul and spirit of godlinesse
should have been enclosed, but the Lord did alwayes
urge more earnestly the substance and truth, then the
ceremonie, the weightier matters of the Law, piety,
equitie, and sobrietie, then these lighter external
Ceremonies, He setteth an higer accout upon mercy
then sacrifice, and upon obedience then Ceremonies,
but this people turned it just contrary, they summed
up all their religion in some ceremonial performance,
and separated these things God had so neerly con-
joynd; they would be devout men in offering sa-
crifices, in their washings, in their rites, and yet
made no conscience of heart, and soul pietie towards
God, and upright just dealing with men; Therefore
the Lord so often quarrels them, and reflects all their
service

132 *God must be worshipped according to his*
service as being a device and invention of their
which never entered into his heart, *Isa. 1. from*
to 16. Jer. 7. throughout, Isa. 66. to 6. Isa.
Now if you will examine it impartially it is
just so with us, there are some external things in
ligion, which in comparison with the weightier
things of Faith and obedience are but ceremonies;
these you place the most part, if not all your
glory, and think your selves good Christians, if
be Baptized, and hear the Word, and partake of
Lords Table, and such like, though in the mean
while you be not given to secret prayer and reading,
do not inwardly judge and examine your selves,
ye may flee unto a Mediator; Though your con
fession be unjust and scandalous among men; I say
such souls, as the Lord to the Jews, who had
required this at your hands? Who commanded
to hear the Word, to be Baptized, to wait on
lick Ordinances? Away with all this, it is ab
omination to his Majesty, though it please you never
well, the more it displeases him; If ye say,
he commands he us to hear, &c. I say, the Lord
commanded these external Ordinances for the sake
true Religion, that was not the great thing which
was in his heart, that he had most pleasure in
the weightier matters of the Law, piety, equity,
and sobriety, a holy and godly conversation ad
vancing the Gospel: *What hath the Lord required of*
but this, O man? to do justly, and walk humbly
thy God? So then, thou dost not worship him
in truth, but in a shadow; the truth is, holinesse,
righteousnesse, that external profession is but a cere
mony, while you separate these external ordina
nces from these weighty duties of piety and justice,
they are but as a dead body without a soul. If the
Lord required truth of old, much more now, who
hath abolished the multitude of Cerimonies,
the great things of the Law may be more seen
and loved.

will; and not according to our inventions. 133
If you would then be true worshippers, look the
whole mind of God, and especially the chief plea-
se of Gods mind, that which he most delights into,
and by any means do not separate what God hath con-
fined, do not divide righteousness towards men,
from a profession of holiness to God, else it is but a
show, a counterfeit Coyn; do not please your
eyes so much in external Church-priviledges, with-
out a holy and godly conversation adorning the Go-
spel; but let the chief study, endeavour and delight
of your souls be about that, which God most delights
in, let the substantials of Religion have the first
place in the soul, pray more in secret, that will be
the life of your souls, you ought indeed to attend
publick Ordinances, but above all, take heed to your
conversation and walking at home, and in secret, pray-
ing in your Family is a more substantiall worship, then
to sit and hear prayer in publick, and prayer in secret
more substantial then that: The more retired
and immediate a duty be, the more weighty it is, the
more it crosse thy corruptions; and evidence the
stamp of God on thy affections, the more divine it
is. And therefore to serve God in these, is to serve
him in truth. Practise hath more of truth in it, then
profession, When your fathers executed judgement,
was not this to know me? Duties that have more oppo-
sition from our natures against them: and lesse fuel
to feed the flame of our self-love and corrup-
tion, have more truth in them; and if you should
worship God in all other duties, and not especially in
these, you do not worship him in truth.
Next, let us consider the manner of Divine Wor-
ship: And this is as needful to true worship as true
matter, that it be commanded, and done as it is com-
manded, that compleats true Worship; Now, I
know no better way or manner to worship God into,
then so to worship him as our worship may carry
the stamp of his Image upon it, as it may be a glasse
wherein we may behold Gods Nature and Proper-
ties;

134 *God must be worshipped according to his*
ties: For such as himself is, such he would be
known to be; I would think it were true wor-
ship indeed, which had engraven on it the Name
of the true and living God; if it did speak out so much
of itself, *That God is, and that he is a rewarder*
them that seek him diligently. Most part of our
vice speaks an unknown God, and carrieth such
Inscription upon it, *To the unknown God:* there is
little either reverence, or love, or fear, or knowledge
in it, as if we did not worship the true God, but
an Idol. It is said, that the fool *says in his heart*
that there is no God, because his thoughts and affec-
tions, and actions are so little composed to the fear and
likenesse of that God, as if he did indeed plainly deny
him; I fear it may be said thus of our worship
it says, *There is no God,* it is of such a nature that
none could conclude from it that it had any relation
to the true God, our prayers denies God, because
there is nothing of God appears in them; but this
is true worship, when it renders back to God his own
Image and Name: *Unde repercussus redditur ipse* for
as it is a pure and clean fountain, in which a man may
see his shadow distinctly, but a troubled fountain
myre in which he cannot behold himself; So it is
pure worship, which receives and reflects the pure
Image of God, but impure and unclean worship,
which cannot receive it, and return it. I pray you
Christians consider this, for it is such worshippers
the Father seeks, and why seeks he such? but be-
cause in them he finds himself (so to speak) his own
Image and Superscription is upon them; his mercy
is engraven on their faith and confidence; his Majesty
and power is stamped on their humility and rever-
ence; his goodnesse is to be read on the souls rejoy-
cing; his greatnesse and Justice, in the souls trem-
bling. Thus there ought to be some engravings on
the soul answering the characters of his glorious
Name; O how little of this is amongst them that
desire to know something of God? How little true
worship

will, and not according to our invention. 135
worship, even among them whom the Father hath
sought out to make true worshippers? But alas,
how are all of us acquainted with this kind of wor-
ship? We stay upon the first principles and practises
of Religion, and goeth not on to build upon the
foundation: Sometimes your worship hath a stamp
of Gods holinesse and justice, in fear and terroure at
such a Majesty, which makes you to tremble before
him; but where is the stamp of his mercy and grace,
which should be written in your faith and rejoycing?
Tremble and fear indeed, but rejoyce with trembling,
because there is mercy with him: Sometimes there
is rejoycing and quietnesse in the soul, but that quick-
ly degenerates into carnal confidence, and makes the
soul turn grace into wantonnesse, and esteem of it-
self above what is right, because it is not counter-
poised with the sense and apprehension of his holi-
nesse and justice: But, O to have these joyntly writ-
ten on the heart, in worship, fear, reverence, confi-
dence, humility and faith! That is a rare thing, it
is a divine composition and temper of spirit, that
makes a divine soul: For the most part, our worship
favourites and smells nothing of God, neither his power,
nor his mercy and grace, nor his holinesse and ju-
stice, nor his Majesty and glory; a secure, faint, for-
mall way, void of reverence, of humility, of ser-
vency, and of faith: I beseech you, let us consider
as before the Lord, how much pains and time we lose,
and please none but our selves, and profite none at
all; Stir up your selves, as in his sight, for it is the
keeping of our souls continually as in his sight, which
will stamp our service with his likenesse: The fixed
and constant meditation on God and his glorious pro-
perties, this will beget the resemblance between our
worship, and the God whom we worship, and it will
imprint his Image upon it, and then it should please
him, and then it should profit thee, and then it should
edifie others.

But more particularly: True worship must have
the

136 *God must be worshipped according to be*
the stamp of Gods spiritual nature, and be comforted
to it in some measure, else it cannot please him.
There must be a conformity between God and man;
this is the great end of the Gospel, to repair
Image of God which was once upon man, and make
them like God again; Now it is this way that
Christ repairs this Image, and brings about this
conformity with God, by the souls worshipping of
himself, which as it growes more
more suitable to Gods Nature, it is the more and more
like God; and happy in that likeness. Now, *Gods*
Spirit, therefore (saith Christ) you must worship
in Spirit and truth. The worship then of Saints
must be of a spiritual nature, that it may be like the
mortal divine Spirit: It is such worshippers
Father seeks, he seeks souls to make them like
himself, and this likeness and conformity to God, is
very foundation of the souls happiness, and ever
refreshment.

This is a point of great Consequence, and I fear
laid to heart. The worship must be like the Wor-
shipped, It is a Spirit must worship the Eternal Spi-
rit, it is not a body that can be the principle and
Agent in the business: What Communion can
we have with your bodies, while your souls are remo-
far from him, more then with beasts? All society
and fellowship must be between these that are
one another; a man can have no comfortable com-
pany with Beasts, or with Stones and Trees; but
men that can converse with men, and a Spirit must
worship the self-being Spirit. Do not mistake this
as if under the dayes of the Gospel we were not
led to an external and bodily worship, to any
vice to which our outward man is instrumental;
this is one of the deep delusions of this age, into which
some men reprobate concerning the Faith have fallen
that there should be no external Ordinances but
Christians are now called to a worship, all Spirit
pure Spirit, &c. This is one of the Spirits and

will, and not according to our invention. 137
tual doctrines (that calls themselves so) which ye
must not receive , for it is neither the Spirit of God,
nor of Christ that teacheth this , not the spirit of
God the Creator , because he hath made the whole
man , Body and Soul , and so must be worshipped of
the whole man : He hath created man in such a capa-
city as he may offer up external actions in a reason-
able manner, with the inward affections ; as the Lord
hath created him so should he serve him ; every
member, every part in its own capacity , the soul to
precede, and the body to follow , the soul to be the
chief worshipper , and the body its servant employ-
ed in the worship , True worship hath a body and a
soul , as well as a true man ; and as the soul separated
is not a compleat man , so neither is the soul sepa-
rated a compleat worshipper without the body ;
the external Ordinances of God is the body , the in-
ward soul affection is the spirit , which being joyned
together makes compleat Worship. Neither is it the
Spirit of Christ which teacheth this , because our
Lord Jesus hath taught us to offer up our bodies and
spirits both in a reasonable service , *Rom. 12. 1, 2.*
The sacrifice of the bodily performance , offered up
by the spiritual affection, and renewed minde is a li-
ving sacrifice, holy, acceptable and reasonable : That
spirit which dwelt in Christ above measure , did not
think it too base to vent it self in the way of exter-
nal Ordinances , He was indeed above all , above the
law , yet did willingly come under them ; to
teach us, who have so much need and want to come
under them ; He prayed much , he preached , he did
sing and read , to teach us how to worship , and how
much need we have of prayer and preaching : This
was not the Spirit Christ promised to his Disciples
and Apostles, which Spirit did breath most lively in
the use of the external Ordinances all their dayes :
and this is not the Spirit which was at that hour in
which Christ spake , *The hour is come and now is, vers.*
13. In which the true worship of God shall not be in the,

138 *God must be worshipped according to his*
external Jewish Ceremonies and rites, void of all
and inward sense of Piety; but the true wor-
of God shall be made up of a soul and body, of
rit and Truth, of the external appointed Ordina-
according to the word of Truth, and the spirit
Truth; and of the spirit and inward soul-affec-
and sincerity which shall quicken and actuate that
ternal performance: There were no such wor-
pers then as had no use of Ordinances, Christ
not such, His Disciples were not such, therefore
is a new Gospel, which if an Angel would bring
Heaven ye ought not to receive it.

As it is certain then that both soul and body
be employed in this businesse, so it is sure that
soul and spirit must be the first mover, and chief
Agent in it, because it is a spiritual businesse, and
relation to the fountain-spirit, which hath the
perfect opposition to all false appearances and ex-
nal shews; that part of man that cometh near
God, must draw nearest in worshipping God, and
that be removed far away: there is no real Com-
nion with God; men judges according to the
ward appearance, and can reach no further then
outward man, but God is an all-searching spirit
trieth the heart and reins, and therefore he will
another judgement upon your worship, then men
do, because he observeth all the secret wanderings
escapes of the heart out of his sight, he misseth
soul when you present attentive ears, or eloq-
tongues, there is no dallying with his Majesty, pa-
ing will not deceive him, His very nature is contri-
to hypocrisie and dissimulation, and what is it
dissimulation, when you present your selves to
ligious exercises as his people, but within are
rthing like it, nothing awaking, nothing prese-
O consider my beloved what a one you have to
with! it is not men, but the Father of Spirit
who will not be pleased with what pleases men,
your own flesh, but must have a Spirit to leave
Al

will, and not according to our invention. 139

Alas what are we doing with such empty names and shews in Religion? Bused in the outside of worship only, as if we had none to deal with but men who have eyes of flesh, all that we do in this kind is lost labour, and will never be reckoned up in the account of true worship: I am sure you know and may reflect upon your selves, that you make Religion but a matter of outward fashion, and external custome; you have never almost taken it to heart in earnest, you frequent the Ordinances, you may have a form of godlinesse, consisting in some outward performances and priviledges, and O how void and destitute of all Spirit and Life, and Power? Not to speak of the removal of affection, and the imploying of the marrow of your soul upon base lusts and creatures, or the scattering of your desires abroad amongst them, for that is too palpable; but even your very thoughts and minds are removed from this businesse, you have nothing present but an ear, or eye, and your minds is about other businesse, your desires, your fears, your joyes, and delights, your affections did never run in the channel of Religious exercises, all your passion is vented in other things, but here you are blockish and stupid, without any sensible apprehension of God, his mercy, or justice, or wrath, or of your own misery and want, you sorrow in other things but none here, none for sin, your joy for other things, but none here, you cannot rejoyce at the Gospel. Prayer is a burthen not a delight, if your spirits were chiefly imployed in Religious duties, Religion would be almost your Element, your pleasure and recreation, but now it is wearisome to the flesh, because the spirit taketh not the chief weight upon it; Oh, be not deceived! God is not mocked, you do but mock your selves with external shews while you are satisfied with them: I beseech you look inwardly, and be not satisfied with the outward appearance, but ask at thy soul where it is? and how it is? retire within, and bring up
thy

140 *God must be worshipped according,* O
thy spirit to this work; I am sure you may observe
that any thing goes more smoothly and sweetly with
you, then the worship of God, because your mind
is more upon any thing else, I fear the most part
us who endeavour in some measure, to seek God
have too much drosse of outward formality and
much scum of filthy hypocrisie and guile, O! pray
that the present furnace may purge away this scum.
It is the great ground of Gods present controversy
with *Scotland*, but alas, the Bellows are like to burn
and we not be purged, our scum goes not from us
we satisfie our selves with some outward exercise
of Religion, custome undoes us all, and it was never
more undoing then when indignation and wrath
pursuing it: Oh that you would ponder what you
lose by it, both the sweetnesse and advantage of god-
linesse, beside the dishonour of God: You take a for-
mall, negligent, and secure way, as the most easie
way, and the most pleasing to your flesh, and I am
perswaded you find it the most difficult way, because
you want all the pleasant and sweet refreshment, and
soul-delights you might have in God, by a serious
and diligent minding of Religion. The pleasure and
sweetnesse of God tasted and found, will make diffi-
culty and pains more easie, then slothfulnesse can be
to the sloathful, this oyls the wheels, and makes them
drive swiftly; formality makes them drive heavily,
thus you live always in a complaining humor, *sighing*
and going backward, because you have some stirring
principle or conscience within, which bears witness
against you; and your formall sluggish disposition on
the other hand, refuseth to awake and work, you are
perplexed and tormented between the two, when
thy spirit and affections goes one way, and thy body
another; when thy conscience drives on the Spirit,
and thy affections draws back, it must needs be an un-
pleasant businesse.

The Mystery of the Trinity the greatest. 141

Deut. 6. 4. *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.*

1 Joh. 5. 7. *There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.*

Great is the mystery of Godliness, 1 Tim. 3. 16. Religion and true Godliness is a bundle of excellent mysteries, of things hid from the world, yea, from the wise men of the world, 1 Cor. 2. and not only so, but secrets in their own nature, the distinct knowledge whereof is not given to Saints in this estate of distance and absence from the Lord: There is almost nothing in divinity, but it is a mystery in itself, how common soever it be in the apprehensions of men, for it is mens overtie, and common, and slender apprehensions of them, which makes them look so commonly upon them, there is a depth in them, but you will not know it till you search it, and sound it, and the more you sound, you shall find it the more profound: But there are some mysteries small, and some great, there is a difference amongst them, all are not of one stature, of one measure: The mystery of Christs Incarnation, and Death and Resurrection, is one of the great mysteries of Religion, God manifested in the flesh, yet I conceive there is a greater mystery then it, and of all mysteries in nature or divinity, I know none to this, the Holy Trinity, and it must needs be the greatest of all, and without controversie greatest, because it is the beginning and end of all, *fons & finis omnium*, all mysteries have their rise here, and all of them return hither. This is the furthest removed from the understandings of men, what God himself is, for himself is infinitely above any manifestation of himself: God is greater then

142 *The mystery of the Trinity the greatest*
then God manifested in the flesh, though in that
spect he be too great for us to conceive. There is
natural desire in all men to know, and if any thing
be secret and wonderfull, the desire is more inflamed
after the knowledge of it, the very difficulty or
possibility of attaining it, instead of restraining
curiosity of mans spirit, doth rather incense it.
timor in vetitum is the fruit, the sad Fruit we pluck
and eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good
evil. If the Lord reveal any thing plainly in
Word to men, that is despised and set at nought
because it is plain, whereas the most plain truths
which are beyond all controversie, are the most
necessary and most profitable for our eternal Salvation
but if there be any secret mystery in the Scripture
which the Lord hath only pointed out more obscurely
to us, reserving the distinct and clear understanding
of it to himself, *Deut. 29. 26.* that is the Ark
which our cursed natures will long for, and catch
ter, though there be never so much choise of ex
cellent saving fruit in the Paradise of the Scripture
fides. If the Ark be covered to keep men from lo
ing into it, that doth rather provoke the curio
spirit of man to pry into it, *1 Sam. 6. 19.* If
the Lord shew his wonderfull glory in the Mount, and
discharge his people to come near, lest the glorious
presence of God kill them, he must put rails about
it, to keep them back, or else they will be meddling
such is the unbridled licence of our minds, and the pe
verse dispositions of our natures, that where God
familiarily inviteth us to come, what he earnestly
presseth us to search and know, that we despise
trivial and common; and what he compasseth about
with a divine darknesse of inaccessible light, and he
removed far from the apprehensions of all living
that we will needs search into, and wander into the
forbidden compasses, with daring boldnesse. I con
ceive this holy and profound mystery is one of the
secrets which belongeth to God to know; for, *W*

Know

The Mystery of the Trinity the greatest. 143
knows the Father but the Son, or the Son but the Father,
or who knoweth the mind of God but the Spirit; yet
the foolish minds of men will not be satisfied with
the believing ignorance of such a mystery, but will
needs enquire into these depths; that they may find
satisfaction for their reason, but as it hapneth with
men who will boldly stare upon the Sun, their eyes
are dazled and darkned with its brightnesse; or these
that enter into a Labyrinth, which they can find no
way to come out, but the further they go in it, the
more perplexed it is, and the more intricate; even
so it befalls many unsober and presumptuous spirits,
who not being satisfied with the simple truth of God,
clearly asserting that this is endeavour to examine it
according to reason, and to solve all the objections
of carnall wit and reason (which is often enmitie to
God) not by the silence of the Scriptures, but by
answers framed according to the several capacities of
men, I say, all this is but daring to behold the infinite
glory of God with eyes of flesh, which makes them
darkned in minds, and evanishing in their expressions,
while they seek to behold this inaccessible light,
while they enter into an endlesse Labyrinth of diffi-
culties, out of which the threed of reason and dis-
putation can never extricat them or lead them forth.
But the Lord hath shewed us a more excellent way,
though it be more despicable to men: Man did fall
from blessednesse, by this curious and wretched
aim at some higher happinesse, and more wisdom.
The Lord hath chosen another way to raise him up
again by faith, rather then knowledge, by believing,
rather then disputing: Therefore the great com-
mand of the Gospel is this, to receive with a ready
and willing mind, whatsoever the Lord saith to us,
whatsoever it may appear to sense and reason, to di-
spute no more, to search no more into the secret of
divine mysteries, as if by searching we could find
them out unto perfection, but to believe what is
spoken, till the day break, and the shadows flee away,
and

144 *The Mystery of the Trinity the greatest*
and the darknesse of ignorance be wholly dispelled
by the rising of the Sun of righteousness. We
called then to receive this truth that God is one,
one, and yet there are three in this one, the Father,
Son and Holy Ghost: This I say you must believe
because the wisdom of God saith it, though
know not how it is, or how it can be, though
seem a contradiction in reason, a *Trinity in Unity*,
you must lead your reason captive to the obedience
of Faith, and silence it with this one answer,
Lord hath said it; If thou go on to dispute, and
enquire how can these things be? Thou art cast
from under the power of Faith; and art fled
from the tents of humane wisdom, where thou mayest find
Atheism, but no Religion, *For the world through
foolishdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1. And certainly who
he be that will not quiet his conscience upon the
word of truth in this particular, but will call in
the help of reason and disputation, how to un-
derstand and maintain it, I think he shall be further from
the true knowledge of God, and satisfaction of mind
then before; There is no way here, but to flee
to *Pauls Sanctuary*, *Who art thou O man that disputest*?
When ever thou thinks within thy self, how
this be, how can one be three, and three one,
withall let this of *Pauls* sound in thine ears, *Who
art thou O man who disputest*? Think that thou art
not God: believing ignorance is much
better then rash and presumptuous knowledge,
not a reason of these things, but rather adore
and tremble at the mystery and Majesty of them. *Chri-
stianity* is foolishnesse to the world upon this
count, because its an implicite faith (so to speake
given to God; but there is no fear of being deceived
though he lead thee blind by a way they know not,
he cannot lead them wrong, this holy simplicity
believing every word of God, and trusting without
more trying by disputation, is the very Character
of *Christianity*, and it will be found only true wisdom

The Mystery of the Trinity the greatest. 145

for if any will become wise, he must become a fool in mens account, that he must quite his reason, to learn true Religion, which indeed is a more excellent and divine reason, neither is it contrary to it, though it be high above it.

In this place of *Moses* you have the Unity of God asserted, *The Lord thy God is one Lord*; And that is indeed engraven on the very hearts of men by nature, that God is one, for all may know that the common notion and apprehension of God is, that he is a most perfect being, the original of all things, most wise, most powerfull, and infinite in all perfections. Now common reason may tell any man that there can be but one thing most perfect and excellent, there can be but one infinite, one Almighty, one beginning and end of all, one first mover, one first cause of whom are all things, and who is of none.

Again in this place of *John*, ye have a Testimony of the blessed Trinity of Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in that holy Unity of essence; The great point which *John* hath in hand, is this fundamental of our Salvation, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, in whom all our confidence should be placed, and upon whom we should lean the weight of our souls. And this he proves by a twofold Testimony, one out of heaven, another in the earth, There are three bearing witness to this truth in Heaven, *the Father, the Word*, (that is Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, whom this Apostle calls the Word of God, or wisdom of God, *Joh. 1. 1.*) and *the holy Ghost*. The Father witnessed to this truth in an audable voice out of Heaven; when Christ was Baptized, *Mat. 3. 17.* *This is my well-beloved Son, hear him*, here the Fathers Testimony of the Son when he was Baptized, which was given very solemnly in a great Congregation of people, and divinely; with great Glory and Majesty from Heaven; as if the heavens had opened upon him; and the inaccessible light of God had shined down

O

down

146 *The mystery of the Trinity the great*
down on him, which was confirmed in the tra-
dition, *Mat. 17. 5.* Where the Lord gave a glori-
ous evidence to the astonishment of the three Disciples,
how he did account of him, how all Saints and an-
gels must serve him: *Him hath God the Father sealed*
saith John; indeed the stamp of Divinity, of the
vine Image, in such an excellent manner upon the
Christ, was a Seal set on by God the Father, sig-
nifying and confirming his approbation of his wel-
loved Son, and of the work he was going about.
Then the Son himself did give ample Testimony
of this, this was the subject of His Preaching
throughout the World. *I am the light and life of men, he that*
believeth on me shall be saved; And therefore he
was be called, *The word of God, and the wisdom of God*
1 Joh. 1. 1. Prov. 8, Because he hath revealed
unto us the blessed mystery of wisdom concerning our
salvation, he is the very expression and Character
of the Father's Person and Glory, *Heb. 1.* in his
Person, and he hath revealed and expressed His
Father's mind, and his own Office so fully to the world
that there should be no more doubt of it, out of
the mouth of these two witnesses this word might
be established: But for super-abundance, behold a third,
the holy Ghost witnessing at his Baptism, in his Resur-
rection, after his Ascension, the Holy Ghost sig-
nified his presence and consent to that work, in the
similitude of a Dove, the Holy Ghost testified of
the power that raised him from the dead, the Holy
Ghost put it beyond all question when he descended
upon the Apostles according to Christ's promise.
The other three witnesses on earth, we shall not
depend upon it, only know that the work of the regen-
eration of souls, by the power of the Word and Spirit
signified by water, the justification of guilty souls
purged by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the testimony
of the Spirit in our consciences, bearing witness
in our spirits, is an assured testimony of this, that
Jesus Christ in whom we believe, is the only begotten

the Father, full of grace and truth. The changing, pacifying, and comforting of souls, in such a wonderful manner, cries aloud, that he in whom the soul believes is the true and living God, whom to know is eternal life. But mark I pray you the accuracy of the Apostle in the change of speech, these three witnesses on earth (saith he) agree in one, in giving one common testimony to the Son of God; and Saviour of sinners: But as for the heavenly witnesses, the Father, the Word, and Holy Ghost, howe they be three, after an inconceivable manner, and that they do also agree in one common testimony to the Mediator of men, yet moreover they are one, they not only agree in one, but are one God, one simple undivided self-being-infinite Spirit, holden out to us in three Persons the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to whom be praise and glory.

Dent. 6. 4. and Joh. 5. 7.

ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for instruction, for direction, &c. There is no refuse in it, no simple and plain History, but it tends to some edification, no profound or deep mystery, but it is profitable for salvation, whatsoever secrets there be in the mysteries of God, which is reserved from us, though it be given us, but to know in part, and darkly through a vail, yet as much is given us to know as may make the man of God perfect in every good work, as much is given us to know as may build us up to eternal Salvation: If there were no more use of these deep mysteries of the Holy Trinity, &c. but to silence all flesh, and restrain the unlimited spirits of men, and keep them within the bounds of sobriety and Faith, it were enough. That great secret would teach as

148 *affords instruction and consolation*
much by its silence and darknesse, as the plainer Truth
do by speaking out clearly: O that this great mys-
tery did compose our hearts to some reverence
and awfull apprehension of that God we have to
do with, and did imprint in our soul, a more feeling
of our darknesse and ignorance, this were more
vanage, then all the gain of light, or increase of know-
ledge that can come from the search of curiosity.
If men would labour to walk in that light they have
attained, rather then curiously inquire after what they
cannot know by inquiry, they should sooner attain
more true light, if men would set about the practice
of what they know, without doubt, they would more
readily come to a resolution and clearnesse in doubt-
full things. Religion is now turned into questions
and School-debates, men begin to believe nothing
but dispute every thing, under a pretence of seek-
ing for light and resolution, but for the most part
while men look after light they darken themselves
and this is the righteous judgement of the Lord upon
the world, that doth not receive the Truth in Love
or walk in the light of what they have already at-
tained; Therefore he gives men up to wander in the
search into the dark dungeons of humane wisdom
and fancy, and to lose what they have already. If the
things which are without all controversie (as the
Apostle speaketh, 1 Tim. 3. 16.) were indeed made
confessions of, and embraced in love, and practised,
were beyond all controversie, that the most part of
present controversies would cease: But it falls out
otherwise, as with the dog, that catching at a shadow
in the water, lest the substance in his teeth
should slip, he pushes it after, and discovers in controversy
all things, and not retaining them hold and in the
gap of the substantiall Truths of the Gospel, which
are beyond all controversie, do even lose what they
have. Thus, Even those which they have not
taken from themselves, though they have it in judg-
ment, yet they have it not surely and solidly in af-
fection

fection, that it may be holden: So to this present point, if we could learn to adore and admire this *Holy, Holy, Holy One*; if we could in silence and faith sit down and wonder at this myserie, it would be more profitable to us, and make way for a clearer manifestation of God, then if we should search and inquire into all the Volumes that are written upon it, thinking by this means to satisfie our reason. I think there is more profoundnesse in the sobriety of Faith, then in the depths of humane wisdom and learning, when the myserie is such an infinite depth. O but mens eloquence and wisdom must be shallow, far too shallow either to find it out, or unfold it.

But there is yet both more instruction and consolation to be pressed out of this myserie, and therefore, if you cannot reach it in it self, O consider what it concerns us, how we may be edified by it, for this is true Religion. Look upon that place of *Moses*, what is the great instruction he draweth from this unity of Gods essence, *vers. 5. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, since God is one, then have no God but one, and that the true and living God: and this is the very first command of God; which floweth as it were immediatly from his absolute oneness and perfection of being; There is no man but he must have some God; that is, something whereupon he placeth his affection most, every man hath some one thing he loves and respects beyond all other things, some Lord and Master that commands him, therefore, saith Christ, *no man can serve two masters*; before a man want a God to love and serve, he will make them, and then worship them; yea, he will make himself, his belly, his back, his honour, and pleasure, a God, and sacrifice all his affections, and desires, and endeavours to these; The natural subordination of man to God, the relation he hath as a creature to a Creator, is the first and fundamentall relation, beyond all respects to himself, or other fellow-creatures; this is the proto-natural obligation upon the creature,

creature therefore it should have returned in a
line to his Majesty all its affections and endeavors.
But mans fall from God, hath made a wretched
and crook in the soul, that it cannot look any
after him, but bowes downward towards creature
below it, or bends inwardly towards it self, and
since the fall, man hath turned his heart from
true God, and set it upon vanity, upon lying vanities
upon base dead idols, which can neither help
nor hurt him, your hearts are gone a whoring
God, O that ye would believe it, none of you
deny, but ye have broken all the Commands,
such is the brutish ignorance and stupidity of the
part, that you will not confesse that when it comes
to particulars, and especially if you should be chal-
lenged for loving other things more then God, or
ving other gods beside the true God, you will
stantly deny it, and that with an asseveration
avertation, God forbid that I have another God.
alas this shews that what you confesse in general
not beleived in the heart, but only is like the prayer
of children, whom you may learn to say any thing.
I beseech you consider that what you give your
pains, thoughts, and affections to, that is your God.
you must give God all your heart, and so retain
thing of your own will if God be your God. I
do ye not know that your care, and grief, and desire
and love, vents another way, towards base things.
you know that you have a will of your own, which
goeth quite contrary to his holy will in all things.
Therefore Sathan hath bewitched you, and your
hearts deceived you, when they perswade you that
you have had no other God but the true God. Chri-
stianity raiseth the soul again, and advanceth it
degrees to this love of God from which it had fallen.
the soul returns to its first husband, from whom
went a whoring, and now the stamp of God is
upon it, that it is changed into his Image and glory
having tasted how good this one self-sufficient God

afford satisfaction and consolation. 151

is, is gladly and easily divorcers from all other lovers, it renounces former lusts of ignorance, and now begins to live in another; love transplants the soul into God, and in him it lives, and with him it walks, it is true this is done gradually, there is much of the heart yet unbroken to this sweet and easie yoke of love, much of the corrupt nature untamed, unreclaimed, yet so much is gained by the first conversion of the soul to God, that all is given up to him in affection and desire, he hath the chief place in the soul, the disposition of the spirit hath some stamp and impression of his onenesse and singularity; My beloved is one, though a Christian is not wholly rid of strange lords, yet the eye of subjection to them is broken, they may often intrude by violence upon him, but he is in an hostile posture of affection and endeavour against them. I beseech you since the Lord is one, and there is none beside him, O let this be ingraven on your hearts, that your inward affection and outward actions may expresse that one Lord to be your God, and none other beside him: It is a great shame and reproach to Christians, that they do not carry the stamp of the first principle of Religion upon their walking: the condition and conversation of many declareth how little account they make of the true God; why do ye enslave your souls to your lusts, and the service of the flesh, if ye believe in this one God? Why do ye all things to please your selves, if this one Lord be your one God? As for you the Israel of God, who are called by Jesus Christ to partake with the Common-wealth of Israel, in the Covenant of Promises, hear I beseech you this, and let your souls incline to it, and receive it, your God is one Lord, have you no other lords over your souls and consciences; not your selves, nor others.

But in the next place let us consider to what purpose John leads such three witnesses, that we may draw some consolation from it. The thing testified and witnessed unto, is the ground-work of all Christians

ans hope and consolation, that Jesus Christ is eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world, able to save to the outmost all that put their trust in him, so that every soul that finds it self lost, and unable to subsist nor abide the judgement of God, may repose their confidence in him, and lay the weight of their eternal welfare upon his death and suffering with assurance to find rest and peace in him to your souls. He is such a one as faith may triumph in over the world, and all things beside, a believer may triumph in his victories, and in the faith of his victory over hell and death, and the grave, may overcome personally, *For this is our victory over the world, even our faith*, vers. 4. And how could a soul conquer by faith, if he in whom it believes were not declared to be the Son of God with power, there is nothing so mean and weakly as faith in it self, its a poor delectable thing of it self, and that it sees, and that it acknowledges; yea, faith is a very act of self-denial, its a renouncing of all help without and within self, save only that which is laid on Christ Jesus, therefore it were the most unsuitable mean of prevailing, and the most insufficient weapon for gaining the victory; if the object of it were not the strong God, the Lord Almighty, from whom it derives all, borroweth all its power and vertue, either to pacify the conscience, or to expiate sin, or to overcome the world. Oh consider Christians where the foundation of your hopes is situated, it is in the divine power of our Saviour, if he who declared so much love and good will to sinners, by becoming so low and suffering so much, have also all power in Heaven and Earth, if he be not only man near us, to make for us boldnesse of access, but God neer God, to prevail effectually with God, then certainly he is a sure foundation laid in Zion, elect and precious, he is an unmovable Rock of ages, whosoever trusts their soul to him shall not be ashamed. I am sure that many of you considers not this, that Christ Jesus who

who was in due time born of the Virgin Mary, and
 ed for sinners, is the Eternal Son of God, equal to
 his Father in all Glory and Power; O how would
 this make the Gospel a great mystery to souls, and
 the Redemption of souls a precious and wonderfull
 work, if it were considered. Would not souls stand
 at this anchor immovable in temptation, if their faith
 were pitched on this sure foundation, and their hope
 fast upon this solide ground: O know your Re-
 deemer is strong and mighty, and none can pluck you
 out of his hand, and himself will cast out none that
 comes. If the multitude of you believed this, you
 would not make so little account of the Gospel that
 comes to you, and make so little of your sins, which
 should be removed to be taken away by the blood of God, and
 could be expiate by no other propitiation, you
 would not think it so easie to satisfie God with some
 words of custome, and some publick services of forme
 as you do, you would not for all the world do
 with God alone without this Mediator: and being
 convinced of sin (if you believed this solidly then
 he in whom forgiveness of sin and Salvation is
 preached, is the same Lord God of whom you hear
 in the Old Testament, who gave out the Law, and
 inspired the Prophets, the onely begotten of the Fa-
 ther in a way infinitely removed from all created capa-
 cities) you could not but finde the Father well sa-
 tisfied in him, and find a sufficient ransom in his
 death and doings to pacifie God, and to settle your
 consciences.

But as the thing testified is a matter of great con-
 solation, so the witnesses testifying to this funda-
 mentall of our Religion, may be a ground of great
 encouragement to discouraged souls. It is ordinary,
 that the apprehensions of Christians takes up Jesus
 Christ as very lovely, and more loving then any of
 the Persons of the God-head, either the Father or
 the holy Ghost, there are some thoughts of estrang-
 ednesse and distance of the Father, as if the Son did
 really

really reconcile and gain him to love us, who hated us, and upon this mistake the soul is filled with continual jealousies, and suspicions of the love of God: But observe, I beseech you, the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost, all of them first agree in one Testimony, the Father declares from Heaven that he is abundantly well pleased with his Son, not only because he is his Son, but even in the undertaking and performing of that work of Redemption for sinners; it is therefore his most serious invitation and peremptor command to all to hear him, and believe in him, *Mat. 3. 17. 1 Joh. 3. 23.* Nay, if I speak more properly, our salvation it is not the finesse of Christ alone, as we imagine it, but the whole God-head is interested in it deeply, and deeply, that you cannot say who loves it most, or likes it most. The Father is the very Fountain of his love is the Spring of all, *God-so loved the world that he hath sent his Son.* Christ hath not purchased that eternal love to us, but is rather the gift, the gift of eternal love. And therefore as we have the Son delighting among the sons of men, *Prov. 8.* and delighting to be imployed and to do his will, *Psal.* So we have the Father delighting to send his Son and taking pleasure in instructing him, and furnishing him for it, *Isa. 42. 1.* And therefore Christ often professed that he was not about his own work, but the Fathers work who sent him, and that it was not his own will, but the Fathers he was fulfilling. Therefore we would not look upon the head-spring of our salvation in the Son, but rather ascend up to the Father, whose love and wisdom did frame all this. And thus we may be confident to come to the Father in the Son, knowing that it was the love of the Father that sent the Son, though indeed we must come to him only in the Son, in the Name of Christ, and faith of acceptation through a Mediator, not because the Mediator purchaseth his good-will, but because his love and good-will only vents in his beloved Son.

(Christ,

Christ, and therefore he will not be known nor worshipped but in him, in whom he is near sinners, and reconciling the world to himself. And then the Holy Ghost concures in this testimony, and as the Son had the work of purchasing rights and interests to grace and glory, so the great work of applying all these priviledges to Saints, and making them actually partakers of the blessings of Christ his death, is committed in a special way to the Holy Ghost, all agree in one, that Jesus Christ is a sure refuge for sinners, a plank for ship-broken men, a firm and sure foundation to build everlasting hopes upon, there is no party dissenting in all the Gospel, the businesse of the salvation of lost iouls is concluded in this holy Council of the Trinity with one voice, as at first all of them agreed to make man; *Let us make man*, so again they agree to make him again to restore him to life in the second *Adam*. Who ever thou be that would flee in to God for mercy, do it in confidence, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are ready to welcome thee, all of one minde to shut out none, to cast out none. But to speak properly, it is but one love, one will, one counsel and purpose in the Father, Son, and Spirit, for these three are one, and not only agree in one, they are one, and what one loves or purposes, all love and purpose. I would conclude this matter with a word of direction how to worship God, which I cannot expresse in fitter terms then these of *Nazianzen*, *I cannot think upon one, but by and by I am compassed about with the brightnesse of three, and I cannot distinguish three, but I am suddenly driven back unto one*: There is great ignorance and mistake of this even amongst the best Christians, the grosser sort when they hear of one God only, thinks Christ but some eminent man, and so direct their prayers to God only, excluding the Son, and Holy Ghost, or when they hear of three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, they straight way divide their worship, and imagines a Trinity
of

of Gods; And I fear these of us who know
 use not to worship God as he hath revealed his
 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and yet one God,
 minds are reduced to such a simple unity, as we
 upon one of them alone, or else distracted and
 divided into such a plurality, that we worship
 manner three Gods in stead of one. It is a
 mystery to keep the right middle way. Learn,
 I teach you, so to conceive of God, and so to
 knowledge him, and pray to him, as you may do
 the Name of Jesus Christ, that all the Persons
 have equal honour, and all of them one God,
 that while you consider one God, you may
 that sacred and blessed Trinity, and while you
 ship that holy Trinitie, you may straight way
 duced to an unity. To this wonderfull and
 One Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all praise
 Glory.

Eph. 1.11. *Who worketh all things after
 counsel of his own will.*

Job 23. *He is in one mind, and who can
 him, &c.*

HAVING spoken something before of God
 His Nature, and Being, and Properties:
 come in the next place to consider his
 rious Majesty as he stands in some ne
 relation to his creature, the works of his hand
 For we must conceive the first rise of all things in
 world, to be in this self-being, the first concep
 of them to be in the womb of Gods everlasting
 pose and Decree, which in due time, according
 his appointment, brings forth the child of the
 ture to the light of actual existence and being:

certain that his Majesty might have endured for ever, and possessed himself without any of these things, if he had never resolved to create any thing without himself, he had been as blessed then as now, because of his full and absolute self-sufficient perfection. His purposing to make a world, and his doing of it adds nothing to his inward blessedness and contentment; this glorious and holy One, incloses within his own being all imaginable perfections, in an infinite and transcendent manner, that if you remove all created ones, you diminish nothing, if you adde them all, you encrease nothing. Therefore it was the superabundance of his perfection, that he resolved to shew his Glory thus in the world: It is the creatures indigence and limited condition, which maketh it needfull to go without its own compassse; for the happinesse of its own being: Man cannot be happy in loving himself, he is not satisfied with his own intrusick perfections, but he must diffuse himself by his affections and desires, and endeavours, and as it were, walk abroad upon these legs, to seek in supply from the creatures or Creator: The creature is constrained out of some necessity thus to go out of itself, which speaks much indigence and want within it self: But it is not so with his Majesty, his own glorious being contents him, his happinesse is to know that, and delight in it, because it comprehends in it self all, that is at all possible, in the most excellent and perfect manner that is conceivable; nay infinitely beyond what can be conceived by any but himself, so he needs not go without himself to seek love or delight, for it is all within him, and it cannot be without his own being, unlesse it flow from within him, therefore ye may find in Scripture what complacency God hath in himself, and the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father: We find, *Prov. 8.* How the wisdom of God our Lord Jesus was the Fathers delight from all eternity, and the Father again his delight, for he rejoyced alwayes before him,

vers. 30. and this was an al- sufficient possession of one had of another, *vers.* 22. the love between Father and the Son is holden out as the first Part of all loves and delights, *Joh.* 17. 23, 24. This flowes from the infinite excesse of perfection and undance of self-being, that his Majesty is pleased to come without himself, to manifest his own Glory in the works of his hands: to decree and appoint other things beside himself, & to execute that decree.

We may consider in these words some particulars for our edification. 1. That the Lord hath from Eternity purposed within himself, and decreed to manifest his own Glory in the making and ruling of this World, that there is a counsel and purpose of his will which reacheth all things, which have been, are now, or are to be after this. This is clear, *He works all things according to the Counsell of his will.* 2. That his mind and purpose is one mind, one Counsel: I mean not only, *one for ever*, that is, petuall and unchangeable, as the words speaks, but also *one for all*; that is with one simple Act or resolution of his holy Will; he hath determined all the several things, all their times, their conditions, the circumstances. 3. That whatsoever he hath from all eternity purposed, he in time practiseth it, it comes to execution and working, so that there is exact correspondence betwixt his Will and his Work, his mind and his hand, *He works according to the Counsell of his will, and whatsoever his soul desireth, that he doth.* 4. That his purpose and performance is invincible, irresistible by any created power, Himself will not change it, *for he is in one minde*, and none else can hinder it, *for who can turn him?* He desireth and he doeth it, as in the original, there is nothing interveens between the desire and the doing, that can hinder the meeting of these two.

The first is the constant Doctrine of the holy Scriptures of which ye would consider four things. 1. That his purpose and decree is most wise, then

fore Paul cries out upon such a subject, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,* Rom. 11. 33. His will is alwayes one with wisdom, therefore you have the purpose of his will mentioned thus, the Counsel of his Will, for his will (as it were) taketh counsel and advice of wisdom, and discerns according to the depth and riches of his knowledge and understanding: We see among men these are separated often, and there is nothing in the world so disorderly, so unruly, and uncomely, as when will is divided from wisdom, when men follow their own will and lusts as a law, against their conscience, that is monstrous: The understanding and reason are the eyes of the will, if these be put out. or if a man leave them behind him, he cannot but fall into a pit. But the purposes of Gods will are depths of wisdom; Nay, his very will is a sufficient rule and Law, so that it may be well used of him, *stat pro ratione voluntas*, Rom. 9. 13, 14, 15. If we consider the glorious Fabrick of the world, the order established in it, the sweet harmony it keepeth in all its motions and successions; O it must be a wise mind, and Counsel contrived it. Man now having the Idea of this world in his mind, might fancy and imagine many other worlds, bearing some proportion and resemblance to this, but if he had never seen nor known this world, he could never have imagined the thousand part of this world, he could in no wayes have formed an image in his mind of all these different kinds of creatures, creatures must have some example and copy to look to, but what was his pattern? *Who hath been his Counsellour to teach him?* Rom. 11. 34. Who gave him the first rudiments or principle of that Art? surely none, He had no pattern given him, no the least Idea of any of these things furnished him, but it is absolutely and solely his own wise contrivance. 2. This purpose of God is most free and absolute, there is no cause, no reason why he hath thus disposed all things, and

not otherwise as he might have done, but his good will and pleasure, If it be so in a matter of deepest concernment, *Rom. 9. 18.* it must be so in all other things; we may find indeed many in our causes, many peculiar reasons for such and such a way of administration, many ends and uses which they serve, for there is nothing that His Majesty hath appointed, but it is for some use and reason, yet we must rise above all these, and ascend to the Tower of his most high Will and Pleasure which is founded on a depth of Wisdom, and from thence we shall behold all the order, administration and use of the creatures to depend. And herein is a great difference between his Majesties purposes, and ours, you know there is still something presented under the notion of good and convenient, that moves our will, and inclines us for its own goodness to seek after it, and so to fall upon the means to obtain it; therefore the end which we propose to ourselves hath the influence upon our purposes, and measures them, so that from it the motion seems to proceed first, and not so much from within; there is no created thing can thus determine his Majesty; himself, his own glory is the great end which he loves for it self, and for which he loves other things: But among other things, though there be many of them ordained one for anothers use, yet his Will and pleasure is the original of that order, we do not find it, but makes it; you see all the creatures below are appointed for man, as their immediate and next end, for his use and service, but what is it man his goodnesse and perfection which did move and incline his Majesty to this appointment? No doubt, but of his own good will he makes such things to serve man, that all of them together may be for his own Glory. 3. The Lords Decree is the first rise of all things that are, or have been, or are to come; it is the first original of them all, to which they may be reduced as their Spring and Fountain, all of y

may understand that there are many things possible, which yet actually will never be: The Lords Power and Omnipotency is of a further extent then his Decree and purpose, his power is Natural and Essential to his being, his Decree is of choise, and voluntary: The Father could have sent a legion of Angels to have delivered his Son, the Son could have asked them, but none of them would do it, *Matth. 26. 53.* the Lord could have raised up children to *Abraham* out of stones, but he would not, *Matth. 3.* his power when comprehends within its reach all possible things which do not in their own nature and proper conception imply a contradiction, so that infinit worlds of creatures more perfect then this, numbers of Angels and men above these, and creatures in glory surpassing them again, are within the compasse of the boundlesse power and omnipotency of God, but yet for all this it might have fallen out, that nothing should actually and really have been, unlesse his Majesty had of his own free will decreed, what is or hath been, or is to be; His will determines his power, and as it were, puts it in the nearest capacity to act, and exercise it self: Here then we must look for the first beginning of all things that are, they are conceived in the womb of the Lords everlasting purpose, as he speaks, *Zeph. 2. 2.* the decree, is as it were, with childe of beings, *Isa. 44. 7.* Its Gods royal prerogative to appoint things to come, and none can share with him in it: From whence is it, I pray you, that of so many worlds which his power could have framed, this one is brought to light? Is it not because this one was formed (as it were) in the belly of his eternal counsel and will? From whence is it that so many men are, and no more? That our Lord Jesus is slain, when the power of God might have kept him alive? That these men, *Judas, &c.* are the doers of it, when others might have done it? From whence are all these actions good or evil under the Sun, which he might have prevented? But from his

good will and pleasure, from his *determinate* *Counsel*? Act. 4. 28. Can you find the original of in the creature, why thus it is, and why not otherwise? Can you conceive why of all the infinite numbers of possible things, these are, and no others, and what hath translated that number of creatures which is from the state of pure possibility to fixation or actual being, but the decisive vote of Gods everlasting purpose and counsell? Therefore we would alwayes conceive that the creatures and their actions, which have or will have any being in the world, have first had a being in the wondrous Gods Eternal Counsel, and that his will and pleasure hath past upon all things that are, and are not. His Counsel hath concluded of things that have been, will be, that thus they shall be, and his Counsel hath determined of all other things which are also possible, that they shall never come forth into the light of the world, but remain in the dark bowels of Omnipotency, that so we may give him the glory of all things that are not, and that are at all. Then 4. We would consider the extent of his decree and counsel, it is past upon all things, it is universal, reaching every particular being or action of the universe. This is the strain of the whole Scripture, he doth not (as some dream) once create the creatures in a good state and put them in capacity henceforth to preserve themselves, or exercise their own verture and power without dependence on him, as an artificer maketh an Horologe, and orders it in all things that it may do its businesse without him; he is not only general original of action and motion, as if he would command a river to flow by his appointed channels, if he did only work and rule the world by Angels and Ambassadors, that is the weaknesse and infirmity of earthly Kings, that they must substitute Deputies for themselves: But this King appoints all immediately, and disposeth upon all the particular actions of his creatures, good or evil, and so he is the universal

versal absolute Lord of the creature, of its being and doing, it were a long work to rehearse what the scripture speaks of this kind; but, O that ye would read them oftener, and ponder them better, how there is nothing in this world which may seem to fall out by chance to you, that you know not how it is come to passe, and can see no cause nor reason of it, but it falls out by the holy will of our blessed Father, be it of greater or lesse moment, or be it a hair of thy head fallen, or thy head cut off, the most casual and contingent thing, though it surprized the whole world of men and Angels, that they should wonder from whence it did proceed, it is no surprisal to him, for he not only knew it, but appointed it; the most certain and necessary thing according to the course of nature, it hath no certainty but from his appointment, who hath established such a course in the creatures, and which he can suspend when he pleaseth: Be it the sin of men and devils, which seems most opposite to his holinesse, yet even that cannot appear in the world of beings, if it were not in a holy, righteous, and permissive way, first conceived in the womb of his eternal Counsel, and if it were not determined by him for holy and just ends, *Act. 4. 28.*

The second thing propounded is, that his minde and counsel is one, one and the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever; therefore the Apostle speaks of God, *That there is no shadow of change or turning in him, Jam. 1. 17. He is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent; Will he say, and not do it? Numb. 23. 19. and shall he decree and not execute it? Shall he purpose and not perform it? I am God and changes not, that is his Name, Mal. 3. 6.* The Counsel of the Lord shall stand, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations, *Psal. 33. 11.* Men changes their mind oftener then their garments, poor vain man, even in his best estate is changeablenesse, and vicissitude it self, altogether vanity; And this

this ariseth partly from the imperfection of his understanding, and his ignorance, because he doth not understand what may fall out; there are many things secret and hidden, which if he discovered, he would not be of that judgement; and many things may fall out, which may give ground of another resolution; and partly from the weaknesse and perversnesse of his will, that cannot be constant in any good thing, which is not so closely united to it, as that no fear or dishonour can separate from it; But there is no such imperfection in him, neither ignorance nor weaknesse. *All things are naked before him, all their natures, all their circumstances, all events, all emergents, known to him as they are, and all his works from the beginning, as perfectly as in the end; And therefore he may come to a fixed resolution from all eternity, and being resolved, he can see no reason of change, because there is nothing appear after which he did not perfectly discover from the beginning: Therefore, when ever ye read in the Scripture, of the Lords repenting, as *Gen. 6. 7.* and *Jer. 18. 8.* ye would remember that the Lord speaketh in our terms, and like the nurses with the children, uses our own dialect, to point out to us our great ignorance of his Majesty, that cannot conceive more honourably of him, nor more distinctly of ourselves. When he changeth all things about him, he is not changed, for all these changes were at once in his mind, but when he changeth his outward dispensation, he is said to repent of what he is doing, because we use not to change our manner of dealing, without some conceived grief or repentance and change of mind. When a man goes to build a house, he hath no mind but that it should continue so, he hath not the least thought of taking it down again, but afterward it becomes ruinous, and his estate enlargeth, and then he taketh a new resolution to cast it down to the ground, and build a better; thus it is with man, according as he varieth his work, he changeth his mind; But it is not so with*

with God, all these changes of his work, all the successions of times, the variation of dealings, the alteration of dispensations in all ages, were at once in his mind, and all before him, so that he never goes to build a house, but he hath in his own mind already determined all the changes it shall be subject to: When he sets up a Throne in a Nation, it is in his mind within such a period to cast it down again: when he lifteth up men in successe and prosperity, he doth not again change his mind when he throweth them down, for that was in his mind also; so that there is no surprisal of him by any unexpected emergent: Poor man hath many consultations ere he come to a conclusion; But it is not thus with his Counsel, of all these range and new things which fall out in our dayes, he hath one thought of them all from eternity, *He is one minde*, and none of all these things have put him off his eternal mind, or put him to a new advisement about his great projects; Not only doth he not change his mind, but his mind and thought is one, of all, and concerning all: Our poor narrow and limited minds, must part their thoughts among many businesses, one thought for this, another for that, and one after another, but with him there is neither succession of counsels and purposes, nor yet plurality; but as with one opening of his eye, he beholds all things as they are, so with one inclination, or nod of his will, he hath given a Law, and appointed all things, if we can at one instant, and one look, see both light and colours, and both the glasse and the shaddow in it, and with one motion of our wills move towards the end, and the means? O how much more may he with one simple undivided act of his good will and pleasure, passe a determination on all things, in their times, and orders, and in his own infinite and glorious being perceive them all with one look? How much consolation might redound from this to believing souls? Hath the Lord appointed you to suffer persecution
and

and tribulation here? Hath he carved out such a way unto you in this life? Then withall consider that his Majesty hath eternal glory, wrapt up in the same Counsel, from which thy afflictions proceed; Hath he made thy soul to melt before him? Hath he convinced thee, and made thee to flee unto the City of refuge, and expect Salvation from no other but himself? Then know, that life eternal is in the same purpose which gave thee to believe this, though the one be born before the other, yet the decree shall certainly bring forth the other. And for such souls as upon this vain presumption of the infallibility of Gods purposes, thinks it needlesse to give diligence in Religion, know that it is of the same mind and purpose that hath linked the end and the means together as a chain, and therefore if thou expectest to be saved, according to election, thou must according to the same Counsel make thy calling home from sin to God, sure.

Thirdly, What thing soever he hath purposed, he in due time applyes to the performance of it, and then the Counsel of his Will becomes the work of his hands, and there is an admirable harmony and exact agreement between these two: All things come out of the womb of his eternal Decree, by the work of his power, even just fashioned and framed as their lineaments and draughts were proportioned in the Decree, nothing failing, nothing wanting, nothing exceeding, there is nothing in the Idea of his mind, but it is expressed in the work of his hands, there is no raw half wishes in God, men have such imperfect desires, I would have or do such a thing if it were not, &c. He wavers not thus in suspense, but what he wills and desires, he wills and desires indeed, he intends it shall be, and what he intends, doubtlesse he will execute, and bring to passe, therefore his will in due time applyes almighty power, to fulfill the desire of it, and almighty power being put to work by his will, it cannot but work all things

things according to the Counsel of his Will, and whatsoever his soul desireth, that he cannot but do, even as he desires, seeing he can do it; if he will do it, and can do it, what hindereth him to work and do? Know then, that his Commands and precepts to you, signifying what is your duty, they do not so much signify what he desires or intends to work, or have done, as his approbation of such a thing in it self to be your duty, and therefore though he have revealed his will concerning our duty, though no obedience follow, yet is not his intention frustrated or disappointed, for his Commands to you say not what is his intention about it, but what is that which he approves as good, and a duty obliging men: But whatsoever thing he purposes and intends should be, certainly he will do it, and make it be done: If it be a work of his own power alone, himself will do it alone, if he require the concurrence of creatures to it, as in all the works of providence, then he will effectually apply the creatures to his work, and not wait in suspence on their determination? If he have appointed such an end to be attained by such means? If he have a work to do by such instruments, then without all doubt he will apply the instruments when his time comes, and will not wait on their concurrence? You see now strange things done, you wonder at them, how we are brought down from our excellencie? How our land is laid desolate by strangers? How many instruments of the Lords work are laid aside: How he lifts up a rod of indignation against us, and is like to overturn even the foundation of our Land? All these were not in our mind before, but they were in his mind from Eternity, and therefore he is now working it. Believe then, that there is not a circumstance of all this businesse, not one point or jot of it, but is even as it were framed, and carved out of old, his present works are according to an ancient pattern, which he carrieth in his mind, all the measures and degrees
of

of your affliction, all the ounces and grain-w
of your cup, were all weighed in the scales
eternal Counsel, the instruments, the time, the
ner, all that is in it. If he change instruments
was in his mind, if he change dispensations
was in his mind also; And seeing ye know
Scriptures that a blessed end is appointed for the
ly, that all things work for their good, that
subservient to the Churches welfare, seeing
you know his purpose is such as the Scripture
then believe his performance shal be exact accor
ly, nothing deficient, no joynt, no finew, in
work of providence, no line in all this book, a
lum of the creature, but it was written in the
cient Book of his Eternal Counsel, and first fashion
that, *Psal.* 139. 16.

Then lastly, His will is irresistible, his co
shall stand, who can turn him from his purpose
who can hinder him from performance, therefore
attaineth his end, in the highest and most super
degree of certainty and infallibility; Himself
not change his own purpose, for why should
it; if he change to the better, then it reflects
wisdom, if he change to the worse, it reflects
on his wisdom and goodnesse, certainly he can
cause why he should change it; But as himself
not change, so none can hinder his performance
what power, think you, shal it be, that may att
that? Is it the power of men, of strong men, of
men, of any men? No sure, for their breath
their nostrils, they have no power but as he be
in them, if he keep in his breath, (as it were)
perish, all nations are as nothing before him
what power hath nothing? is it devils may
No, for they cannot, though they would, he
them, he limits them: is it good Angels? They
powerful indeed, but they neither can nor will
his will. Let it be the whole university of the
tion, suppose all their scattered force and ve

conjoynd in one, yet it is all but finite, it amounts to no more, if you would eternally add unto it; But all victory and resistance of this kind, must be by a superiour power, or at least by an equal; Therefore we may conclude that there is no impediment or let can be put in his way, nothing can obstruct his purpose, if all the world should conspire as one man to obstruct the performance of any of his promises and purposes, they do but rage in vain, like dogs barking at the Moon, they shall be so far from attaining their purpose, that his Majesty shal disabuse them (so to speak) to his own purpose, he shall apply them quite contrary to their own mind, to work out the counsel of his mind: Here is the absolute King only worth the name of a King and Lord, whom all things in Heaven and Earth obeyes at the first note and beckning to them. Hills, Seas, Mountains, Rivers, Sun, Moon, and Clouds, Men, and Beasts, Angels and Devils, all of them are acted, moved, and inclined according to his pleasure, all of them are about his work indeed, as the result of all in the end shal make appear, and are servants at his Command, going where he bideth go, and coming where he bideth come, led by an invisible hand, though in the meantime they know it not, but think they are about their own businesse, applauds themselves for a time at it, *ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt*, godly men who knows his will and loves it, are led by it willingly, for they yeeld themselves up to his disposal, but wicked men who have contrary wills of their own, they can gain no more by resisting, but to be drawn alongs with it.

Now to what purpose is all this spoken of Gods decrees and purposes, which he hath called a secret belonging to himself? If his works and judgements be a great depth, and unsearchable, sure his decrees be far more unsearchable? For it is the secret and hidden purpose of God, which is the very depth of his way and judgement. But to what purpose is it

all, I say? Not to enquire curiously into the particulars of them, but to profit by them. The scripture holds out to us the unchangeablenesse, fre extent, holinesse and wisdom of them, for our advantage, and if this advantage be not reaped we have them in vain. Not to burden your memories with many particulars, we would labour to draw both instruction and consolation out of them. Instruction, I say, in two things especially, to submit with reverence and respect to his Majesty in all his works and wayes, and to trust in him who knows all his works, and will not change his

There is nothing, wherein I know Christians deficient then in this point of submission, which I take to be one of the chiefest and sweetest, the hardest duties of a Christians, It is hardly found among men, a through compliance of the soul to what his soul desires, a real subjection of our spirits to his good will and pleasure: There is no so much blessed in Scripture, as waiting on him, yeelding to him to be disposed upon, *Blessed are they that wait on him*: pride is his greatest opponent and he opposes himself most to that, for it is in his own nature most derogatory to the highnesse and majesty of God, which is his very glory; Therefore submission is most acceptable to him, when the creature yeelds it self and its will to him, He condescends more to it, he cannot be an enemy to such a submission to his Majesties pleasure, is the very bringing down of the soul willingly to any thing he commands; what ever yoke he put on of duty, suffering to take it on willingly, without arguing against it, which is the great sin condemned in the Jews: to put the mouth in the dust, and to be silent, because he doth it, *I was dumb with silence, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*, he is in submission indeed, silence of mind and mouth, a strait put upon the spirit to think nothing against him, for any thing he doth: It is cer

the greatest fault of Christians, and ground of many more, that ye do not look to God, but to creatures in any thing befalls you, therefore there are so frequent risings of spirit against his yoke, frequent spurring against it, as *Ephraim* unaccustomed with the yoke, do ye, and this is it only makes it heavy and troublesome, if there were no more reason for it, but your own gain, it is the only way to peace and quietnesse, *Durum sed levius fit patientiâ quicquid corrigere est* *efas*, your impatience cannot help you, but hurt you, it is the very yoke of your yoke; but quiet and silent stooping makes it easie in it self, and brings in more help beside, even divine help: Learn this I beseech you, to get your own wills abandoned, and your spirits subdued to God, both in the point of duty and dispensation, If duties commanded crosse by spirit? as certainly the reality and exercise of godlinesse must be unpleasant to any nature, know what thou art called to, to quite thy own will to him, to give up thy self to his pleasure singlely, without so much respect to thy own pleasure or gain; Learn to obey him simply, because he commands, though no profit redound to thee, and by this means thou shalt in due time have more sweet peace and real gain, though thou intend it not. And because any dispensation crosse thy mind, let not thy mind rise up against it, do not fall out with providence, but commit thy way wholly to him, and let him do what he pleaseth in that, be thou minding thy duty, be not anxious in that, but be diligent in this, and thou shalt be the only gainer by it, besides the honour redounds to him.

Then I would exhort you from this ground to trust in him, seeing he alone is the absolute Sovereign Lord of all things, seeing he hath past a determination upon all things, and accordingly they must be, and seeing none can turn him from his way, O then Christians learn to commit your selves to him in all things, both for this life and the life to come, why are

are ye so vain and foolish, as to depend and hang
 poor vain depending creatures? Why do ye
 forsake your selves? Why do ye not forsake all
 as empty shaddows? Are not all
 habits, gifts, graces, strength, riches
 like the idols in comparison of him, who can
 do good, neither can they do evil? *Cursed is he*
trusts in man, Jer. 17. 15. 6. there needs no
 curse then the very disappointment you shall
 withall. Consider I beseech you, that our God
 do all things, what ever he pleaseth in Heaven
 Earth, and that none can obstruct his pleasure,
 is that soul for whom the Counsel of his will
 gaged, and it is ingaged for all that trust in him
 can accomplish his good pleasure in thy behalfe
 ther without, or against means, all impediments
 thorns set in his way: He can burn them up
 who are heirs of the promises, O know your
 ledge, what his soul desireth, he doth even
 and what he hath seriously promised to you,
 fireth. If you ask who are heirs of the Promise
 I would answer simply, these and these only who
 own them, and challenge them, and claim to
 for their life and salvation, these who seek the
 rance only by the Promise, and whose souls
 them and inbraces them. O if you would observe
 how unlike ye are God, ye change often, ye
 often out of the way, but that were not so if
 ye did not imagine him to be like your selves, and
 unbelief which makes him like to your selves
 your frame and tender disposition changeth,
 present and accesse to God is removed; that
 wrong, it speaketh out a mortal creature indeed
 if it be so, O do no more wrong, do not by
 suspitions and jealousies and questionings of him
 gine that he is like unto you, and changed also,
 is a double wrong and dishonour to his Majesty
 Hath he not said, *I am God and changeth not*:
 in one mind, who can turn him? How comes it

that ye doubt of his love as oft as ye change? When ye are in a good temper, ye think he loves you, when it is not so, ye cannot believe but he is angry and hates you; is not this to speak quite contrary to the Word, that he is a God that changes, that he is not in one minde, but now in one, and then in another, as oft as the unconstant wind of a soules self-pleasing humour turns about. Herē is your rest and confidence, if you will be established, not within your selves, not upon marks and signes within you, which ebbe and flow as the Sea, and change as the Moon, but upon his unchangeable nature and faithfull promises. This we desire to hold out to you all, as one ground for all, you would every one have some particular ground in your own disposition and condition, and thinks it ~~general~~ Doctrine only which layeth it not home so, but believe it, I know no ground of real soul-establishment but general truths, and principles common to you all, and our businesse is not to lay any other foundation, or moe foundations, according to your different conditions, but to lay this one Foundation Christ, and God unchangeable, and to exhort every one of you to make that general Foundation your own in particular, by leaning to it, and building upon it, and claiming to it, all other are sandy and ruinous.

Let us now in this sad time presse consolation from this, the Lords hand is in all this, its immediat in every dispensation, and its only carnal mindednesse that cannot see him stretching out his hand to every man, with his own portion of affliction: Know this one thing, that God is *in one mind*; for all these many wayes and judgements, he is *in one mind*, to gather the Saints, to build up the Church the Body of Christ, this is his end, all other businesses is in the by, and observient to this, therefore he will change it as he pleaseth, but his great purpose of good to his people, all the world cannot hinder. Let us then establish our soules in this consideration, all is clear

above, albeit cloudy below, all is calm in Heaven, albeit tempestuous here upon earth: There is confusion, no disorder in his mind, though we see the world out of course, and that all things about with confusion, he hath one mind in it, who can turn him? And that mind is good to them that trust in him; And therefore who can turn us to our good? Let men consult and imagine what they please, let them passe votes and decrees what they will with his people, yet it is all to no purpose, there is a Counsel above, an older Counsel, which must stand and take place in all generations; If our conclusions be not according to the Counsel of his Will, they are but imaginary dreams, like the conceits of a distracted person, who imagining himself King, sits down on the Throne, and gives out decrees and Ordinances. May not he who is in Heaven laugh at the foolishness and madness of men who act in all things as if they had no dependence on him, and go about their business, as if it were contrived already, it is a ridiculous thing for men to order their business, and settle their own conclusions, without once minding one above them, who hath not only a negative, but an affirmative voice in all things: It's true, that God in his deep wisdom hath kept up his particular purposes secret, that men may walk according to an appointed rule, and use all means for compassing their intended ends, therefore it is well said, *Prudens futuri temporis incertum caliginosa nocte premit Deus*, but yet we should mind that of *James*, *If the Lord will*, and that all things, even the most probable, will be subject to his will and pleasure; And therefore we men go without their bounds, either in fear of dangers, or joy conceived in successes, *Ridentque si talis ultra fas trepidat, &c.* Excesse of fear, excessive hope, excessive of joy in these outward things, is ridiculous to him, who hath all these things appointed with him. To him be praise and glory.

Eph. 1. 11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated, &c.*

Rom. 9. 22, 23. *What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, &c.*

IN the Creation of the World, it pleased the Lord after all things were framed and disposed, to make one creature to rule over all, and to him he gave the most excellent nature and privileges beyond the rest, so that it may appear that he had made all things for man, and man immediately for his own glory: As man was the chief of the works of his hands, so we may according to the Scriptures conceive that he was chiefly minded in the counsels of his heart, and that as in the execution of his purpose in creating the world, man had the preeminence assigned unto him, and all seemed subordinate unto him; so in the Lords purposes concerning the world, his purpose about man has the preeminence. He indeed has resolved to declare the glory of his Name in this world; therefore the heavens and firmament are made preachers of that Glory, *Psal. 19. 1, 2, &c.* But in a special manner, his Majesties glorious Name is manifested in man, and about man, he hath set man, as it were, in the Center or midst of the Creation, that all the creatures might direct or bring in their praises unto him, to be offered up in his and their name to the Lord their Maker by him, as the common mouth of the world, and the Lord hath chosen this creature above all the creatures, for the more solemn and glorious declaration of himself, in his special properties; therefore we would gather our thoughts in this business, to hear from the Lord what his thoughts are towards us, for certainly the right understanding of his everlasting Counsel touch-
ing

ing the eternal state of men, is of singular vertue to conform us to the praise of his Name, and establish us in faith and confidence: Predestination is a mystery indeed, into which we would not curiously and boldly inquire, beyond what is revealed, for the soul must needs lose it self in that depth of wisdom and perish in the search of unsearchablenesse; thus the Word speaks in Scripture of this subject intimating to us that it is rather to be admired and conceived, and that there ought to be some ignorance of these secrets, which conjoynd with faith and reverence, is more learned then any curious knowledge. But withall, we must open our eyes upon so much light as God reveals of these secrets, knowing that the light of the Word is a saving refreshing light not confounding; as is his inaccessible light of glory. As far as it pleases his Majesty to open his mouth, let us not close our ears, but open them so to his instruction, knowing that as he will withhold no necessary thing for our salvation, so he will reveal nothing but what is profitable. This is the best bond of sobriety and humble wisdom, to let what he teacheth us, but when he makes an end of teaching, to desire no more learning: It is humblity to seek no more, and it is true wisdom to be content with no lesse.

There is much weaknesse in our conceiving of divine things, we shape and form them in our mind according to a mould of our own experience, or invention, and cannot conceive of them as they are themselves: If we should speak properly, there are not counsels and purposes in God, but one infinite counsel and resolution concerning all things which are in time, by which he hath disposed all in many several times, seasons, conditions, and orders; because we have many thoughts about many things so we cannot well conceive of God, but in likeness to our selves; And therefore the Scriptures conforming to our weaknesse, speaketh so. *How many*

Mens weaknes in conceiving Gods purposes. 177
are thy precious thoughts towards me, saith David, and yet indeed there is but one thought of him, and us, and all, which one thought is of so much vertue, that it is equivalent to an infinite number of thoughts, concerning infinite objects. The Lord hath from everlasting conceived one purpose of manifesting his own glory in such several wayes; And this is the head spring of all that befalls creatures, men and Angels; But because in the execution of this purpose, there is a certain order, and succession, and variety, therefore men do ordinarily fancy such or such a frame and order in the Lords mind and purpose; and as the Astronomers do cut and carve in their imagination, Circles, Orbs, and Epicycles in the Heavens, because of the various and different appearances and motions of Stars in them, whereas it may be really, there is but one Coelestial Body, in which all those various lights and motions do appear, so do men fancy unto themselves an order of the Lords decrees, according to the *Phaenomena*, or appearances of his works in the world, whereas it is one purpose and decree, which in its infinite compasse comprehends all these varieties and orders together: This much we may indeed lawfully conceive of his decree, that there is an exact correspondence and suitablenesse between his Majesties purpose and execution, and that he is a wise Lord, *Wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working*, having some great plot and design before his eyes, which he intends to effect, and which is as it were the great light and Sun of this Firmament, unto which by that same wonderful Counsel all other things are subordinate; And so in the working, it shall appear exactly as his Counsel did delineate and contrive it.

There is no man so empty or shallow but he hath some great designe and purpose which he chiefly aims at; shall we not then conceive that the Lord who instructs every man to this discretion, and teacheth him, *Isa. 28. 26.* is himself wise in his Counsel, and hath

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hath some grand project before him in all this fabric
of the world, and the upholding of it since it
made? Certainly he hath, and if you ask what it is.
The wise man will teach you in general, *He made*
things for himself, even the wicked for the evil day.
Prov. 16. 4. Here then is his great designe and
purpose to glorifie himself, to manifest his own Name
to men and Angels. Now his Name comprehends
Wisdom, Goodnesse, Power, Mercy, and Justice;
the first three he declares in all the works of his hands,
all are well done, and wisely done, the excellency
of the work shews the wonderfull Councellour, and
wise Contriver; the goodnesse of any creature
kind, declares the inexhausted spring of a self-being
from whom it proceeds, and the bringing all these
out of nothing, and upholding them, is a glorious
declaration of his power: But yet in all the works
of his hands, there is nothing found to manifest his
merciful mercy and justice, upon which are the flower
and garland of his Attributes, and unto which
his Majesty seems to be subservient; Therefore
in that one intire purpose of his
Glory, resolves to manifest his wrath, and his
mercy, upon men and Angels, subjects capable of it; where
two Attributes are as the Poles about which all
the Wheels of Election and Reprobation turn, as
you see in the place read, *Rom. 9. 22, 23.* Let this
be established, as the end of all his works, as
designed in his Counsel, and nothing else. It is
not the creature, nor any thing in the creature, which
is first in his mind, but himself, and therefore, *of himself*
and for him are all things; here they have their
beginning, and thither they return, even to the Ocean of
eternal glory, from whence all did spring.

The right establishing of this will help us to
receive aright of his Counsel of Predestination:
a common cavil of carnal reason, how can the
reject so many persons, and fore-ordain them to
destruction? It seems most contrary to his good

God hath made all things for his own glory. 179
and wisdom, to have such an end of eternal Predesti-
nation before him, in the creating of so many thou-
sands, to make men for nothing but to damn them?
Here carnal reason which is *enmity to God*, triumph;
But consider I say, that this is not the Lords end and
chief designe to destroy men, even as it is not his Ma-
jesties first look or furthest reach to give unto others
eternal life, so it is not his prime intent to sink them
into eternal death as if that were his pleasure and de-
light; no indeed, neither is the creatures happi-
nesse nor its misery that which first moves him, or
is most desired of him, but himself only, and he can-
not move out of himself to any businesse, but he
must return it unto himself, therefore the wise
Preacher expresseth it well, *He made all for himself,*
even the wicked for the day of evil, it was not his
great end of creating wicked men to damn them, or cre-
ating righteous men to save them, but both are for a
further and higher end, for himself and his own glory.

All seem to agree about this, that the great end of
all the Lords Counsels and Decrees, is his own glory,
to be manifested on men and Angels, and that this
must be first in his mind, not that there is first or last
with him, but to speak after the manner of men, if
he had many thoughts as we have, this would be his
first thought, and in this one purpose this end is
chiefly aimed at, and all other things are by the Lords
Counsel subordinate to this as means to compasse
that: But as concerning the order of these means,
and consequently of his Majesties purpose about
them, men by examining his Majesty according to
the creatures rules, or according to sense, bring
him down far below his own infinite greatnesse.
Some conceive, that that was first, as it were, in his
mind, which is first done, looking upon the execu-
tion of his purpose in the works of his power, they
imagine that as he first created man righteous, so this
was his first thought concerning man, to create man
for the glory of his goodnesse and power, without
any

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any particular determination as yet of his end.
I conceive this is the thought of the multitude
people, they think God was disappointed in his
when they hear he created such a glorious creature
that is now become so miserable, they cannot but
that his Majesty had all this sin and misery deter-
with him, when he purposed to create him, but
upon the emergent of mans fall into sin and misery
as a surprisal of his Majesty, as if he had made
another thing in creating him, and so was upon
occasion of mans sin driven to a new consultation
about the helping of the businesse and making the
out of it that might be. Thus through wildest
world knows not God, they think God altogether
like themselves, and so liken him to the builder
an house, who set nothing before him in doing
but to build it after that manner for his own end
then being surprized with the fall and ruine
taketh a new advisement and builds it up again
another sure foundation; But because they
say that God taketh any new advisements in time
must confesse that all his Counsels are everlast-
concerning all the works of his hands; Then
they bring in fore-knowledge to smoothe their
glorious conceit of God, as if the Lord upon his
pose of creating man had foreseen what should
him, and so purposed to permit it to be so
out of it he might erect some glorious fabrick of
clemency and justice upon the ruins of man; and that
or nothing may be left to the absolute Sover-
will of God, to which the Scripture ascribes
things, they must again imagine that upon his
pose of sending Christ to save sinners, he is yet
determined about the particular end, of part
men, but watcheth on the tower of fore-know-
to espie what they will do, whether men will
lieve in his Son or not, whether they will perse-
in Faith or not, and according to his observation
their doings, so he applies his own will to car-

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their reward or portion of life or death. These are
even the thoughts which are imbred in your breasts
by nature, that which the learned call Arminianisme
nothing else but the carnal reason of mens hearts
which is enimity to God, it is that very disputation
which *Paul* in this Chapter exclaims against, *Who art*
thou, O man, that disputest.

But certainly all this contrivance, is nothing be-
coming the wisdom or Sovereignty of God, but re-
flects upon both; upon his wisdom, that he should
have thoughts of creating the most noble of his crea-
tures, and yet be in suspence about the end of the
creature, and have that in uncertainty what way his
glory shall indeed be manifested by it. Is it not the
first and chief thought of every wise man, what he
tends and aims at in his work, and according to the
measure and reach of his wisdom, so he reaches fur-
ther in his end and purpose: Shall we then conceive
the only wise God, so far to have mistaken himself,
to do that which no wise man would do; He who
of such an infinite reach of wisdom and understand-
ing, to fall upon the thoughts of making such an ex-
cellent creature, and yet to ly in suspence within
himself, about the eternal estate of it, and to be in
waiting posture what way his glory should be ma-
nifested by it, whether in a way of simple goodnesse
only, or in a way of justice, or in a way of mercy,
all he should foresee off the tower of fore-knowledge
how that creature should behave it self. Our Text
speaks not thus: For in the place, *Eph. 1.* We have
the Lord in his Eternal purpose carving out such and
such particular persons an inheritance, and Adoption
of children, for that great end of the glory of his
face, *verf. 11.* and 5, 6. and predestination falls out,
not according to our carriage, but according to the
purpose of him who *works all things* that he works,
after the counsel of his own will, without consulting
our will, and if you enquire what are these *all things*,
certainly we must take it simply for *all things* that are

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at all, or have any real being, his power, must be in it, and that according to his own will, without respect had to the creatures will, and to his own good pleasure, *vers. 5. 11.* He had sooner a thought of working and making men to this purpose was in it, to make such men to the use of his glorious grace, and to fore-ordain their inheritance, and others to make or fit them for destruction, as the Text, *Rom. 9. vers. 22.* bears. The great and unsearchable wisdom of God is to be a great depth, that when he hath a thought of making such a vessel, he hath this purpose in the bottom of it, what use shal it be for, whether for honour or dishonour, and accordingly in his counsel prepares it either to glory or destruction, and makes it fit for its use, either by sin or grace: *is the depth that cannot be sounded by mortal men.* *O the depth of the riches both of his wisdom and knowledge, how unsearchable are his judgements, how wyes past finding out?* The whole tenor of the scriptures shew that his Majesty was not surprized taken at unawares by Adams fall, but that it was according to the determinate counsel of his will. He knew it, and suffered it to be, certainly he permitted it, because he willed it should be so; And why should he not determine that in his holy counsel which his wisdom can disabuse to the most glorious end that could be, why may not he decree such a fall, who out of ruins can erect such a glorious Throne for his glory and justice to triumph into? It is more for the glory of his infinite wisdom, to bring good: and to bring good out of evil, then only to permit that should be.

Then such Doctrine is repugnant to the Lord's absolute power and sovereignty, which is *Paul's* sanctuary whether he flies unto as a sure refuge, the stroke or blast of carnal reason. *Hath not the Lord power over the clay, to make of the same lump vessels to honour, another to dishonour, vers. 21.* *Hath*

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The Lord more absolute dominion over us, then the
Potter hath over the clay, for the Potter made not the
clay, but the Lord hath made us of nothing, so that
simply and absolutely we are his, and not our own,
and so he hath an absolute right to make any use of
us he pleaseth, without consulting our wills and de-
servings. Can any man quarrel him for preparing him
to destruction, seeing he owes nothing to any man, but
may do with his own what he pleaseth? What if
God willing to make known his power, and justice,
and wrath, have fitted and prepared some vessels for
destruction, with which, in time he bears much,
and forbears long, using much patience towards them?
Can any man challenge him for it? *vers. 22.* And
what if God willing to make known the riches of his
grace, have prepared some vessels to glory, shall any
mans eye be evil because he is good? *vers. 23.* Shall
man be left to be his own disposer, and the shaper
of his own fortune? Sure it was not so with *Esaue*
and *Jacob*, they were alike in the womb, if there
was any prerogative, *Esaue* the eldest had it, they had
none neither good nor evil; what difference will then
between them, to cast the ballance of his will? Can
you imagine any? Indeed carnal reason will say, that
God fore-knew what they would do, and so he
choosed or rejected, But why doth not the Apostle
answer thus unto that objection of unrighteousnesse
in God? *vers. 14.* It had been ready and plain, but
whether he opposeth the will and calling of God, to all
works past, or to come, he gives no answer but this,
He will have mercy because he will have mercy, that
is the supream rule of righteousness, and hitherto
must we flee, as the surest anchor of our hope and
stability, our Salvation depends not on our willing
or running, on our resolving or doing, but upon this
primitive good pleasure and will of God, on which
hangs our willing, and running, and obtaining. It is
certainly an unorderedly order, to flee unto that in men,
for the cause of Gods eternal counsels, which only

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flowes from his eternal counsel, *Ephes. 1. 4.* He
chosen us because he did fore-know that we were
be holy, and without blame, as men think, or
he not rather chosen us to be holy and without
blame; He cannot behold any good or evil in
creature, till his will passe a sentence upon it, for
whence should it come?

Seeing then this order and contrivance of
purpose is but fained, it seems to some that the
contrare method were more suitable, even to
rules of wisdom: You know what is first in
intention, is last in execution, the end is first
their mind, then he means to compass that end
but in practice again, men fall first upon the means
and by them come at length to attain their end, there-
fore these who would have that first, as it were
Gods minde, which he doth first, do even contrary
common rules of reason in humane affairs: It would
seem then (say some) that this method might
well, that what is last in his execution, was first
his purpose, and by him intended as the end of
he doth first, and so some do rank his decrees; as
he had first a thought of glorifying man, and to
tain this end he purposed to give him grace, and
this purpose to suffer him to fall, and for all to curse
him: But we must not look thus upon it either
were a foolish and ridiculous counsel unbeseem-
the poor wisdom of man, to purpose the glorifying
of man whom he had not yet determined to curse,
therefore we would alwayes have in our mind,
the great end and project of all is the glory of
mercy and justice upon men, and this we may
ceive is first in order, neither mens life nor death,
Gods glory to be manifested upon men. Now to
tain this glorious end, with one inclination or deter-
mination of his will, not to be distinguished or seve-
he condescends upon all that is done in time, as
compleat and intire mean of glorifying himself
that one of them is not before another in his m

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but altogether: for attaining this he purposes to
create man, he ordains the fall of all men into a state
of sin and misery, and some of these upon whom he
had resolved to shew his mercy, he gives them to
Christ to be redeemed, and restored by grace; others
he fore-ordains them to destruction, and all this at
once, without any such order as we imagine: Now
though he intend all this at once and together, yet it
doth not hence follow that all these must be executed
together, as when a man intends to build a house for
his own accomodation, there are many things in the
house upon which he hath not several purposes, but
yet they must be severally, and in some order done;
first, the foundation laid, then the walls raised, then
the roof put on; yet he did not intend the founda-
tion to be for the walls, or the walls for the roof,
but altogether for himself; Even so the Lord pur-
poses to glorifie his mercy and justice upon a certain
number of persons, and for this end to give them a
being; to govern their falling into misery, to raise
some out of it by a Mediator, and to leave some into
it to destruction, and all this as one intire mean to il-
lustrate his glorious mercy and justice; but these
things themselves must be done not all at once, but
one before another, either as their own nature re-
quires, or as he pleaseth; the very nature of the
thing requireth that man be created before he sin, that
he sin and fall before a Mediator suffer for his sin, and
that he have a being, before he have a glorious being,
and that he have a sinful and miserable being, before he
have this glorious and gracious being, which may
manifest the grace and mercy of God: But it is the
pleasure of the Lord that determineth in what time
and order Christ shall suffer, either before or after
the conversion of sinners, or whether sinners shall be
presently inflated in glory and perfectly delivered
from all sin at their first conversion, or only in part
during this life,

Seeing then this was his Majesties purpose to make

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so many vessels of honour, upon whom he
glorifie the riches of his grace and mercy ; and
my vessels of wrath, upon whom he might shew
power of his anger ; You may think what
all this businesse of mans Redemption, might
God have either preserved so many as he
pointed to glory from falling into sin and misery
at least, have freely pardoned their sin without
satisfaction, and out of the exceeding riches of
mercy and power, have as well not imputed
them at all, as imputed their sins to Christ,
was not guilty ? What needed his giving
to the Son, and the Sons receiving them ? What
ed these mysteries of Incarnation, of Redemp
seeing he might have done all this simply witho
much pains and expence, why did he choose this
Indeed that is the wonder, and if there were no
end for it, but to confound mortality that dar
him what he doth, it is enough ; should he be
down to the Bar of humane reason, to give an acc
of his matters ? *Who hath known the mind of the*
er being his Counsellour hath taught him ? That
the depths of his unsearchable understanding
he choosed to go this round, and to compa
end by such a strange circuit of means, wh
might have done it simply and directly, witho
much pains ; yet it is not so hidden, but he ha
vealed as much as may satisfie or silence all
For we must consider that his great project is n
ply to manifest the glory of his goodnesse, but
gracious and mercifull goodnesse, the most
and excellent of all ; and therefore man must be
rable, sinfull, and vile, that the riches of his
may appear in choosing and saving such persons
that it may appear also how excellent he could
man, and how vain all created perfections are,
left to themselves, therefore he first made man
teous, and being fallen into sin and misery, he
straigh way have restored him without more

God hath made all things for his own glory. 189
his purpose was to give an exact demonstration of
mercy, tempered and mixed with justice, and there-
fore he finds out the satisfaction in his eternal Coun-
sel, *I have found a ransom*, and so he chooseth Jesus
Christ to be the Head of these chosen souls, in whom
they might be again restored unto eternal life, and
these souls, he, in his everlasting purpose gives over
to the Son to be redeemed, and these the Son receives;
And thus the glory of Mercy and Justice shines most
brightly, yea, more brightly, then if he had at first
pardoned. O how doth his love and mercy appear,
that he will transferre our sins upon his holy Son, and
accept that redemption for us and his Justice, that a
redemption and price he must have, even from his
Son, when once he comes in the stead of sinners;
And in this point do the Songs of eternity con-
center.

Rom. 9. 22. and Eph. 1. 11.

WE are now upon a high subject, high in-
deed for an eminent Apostle, much
more above our reach, the very confi-
deration of Gods infinite wisdom,
might alone suffice to restrain our unlimited thoughts
and serve to sober our minds, with the challenge of
our own ignorance and darknesse, yet the vain and
wicked mind of man will needs quarell with God,
and enter the lists of disputation with him, about his
righteousnesse and wisdom, in the Counsel of Electi-
on and Reprobation: *But who art thou, O man that re-
liest against God, or disputes? vers. 20.* This is a
thing not to be disputed, but believed, and if ye will
believe no more then ye can comprehend by sense or
reason, then ye give his Majesty no more credit then
weak mortal man; What ever secret thoughts do
rise

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rise up in thy heart when thou hears of Gods
ordaining men to eternal life, without previous
fight or consideration of their doings, and preparing
men to eternal wrath, for the praise of his Justice,
without previous consideration of their deserving,
and passing a definitive sentence upon the ends of
men, before they do either good or evil: Whence
any secret surmizes riseth in thy heart against this,
learn to answer thus, enter not the lists of disputa-
tion with corrupt reason, but put in this bridle of the
fear of Gods greatnesse, and the conscience of thy
own basenesse, and labour to restrain thy undaunted
and wild mind by it; Ponder that well, who thou
art who disputes, who God is, against whom thou
disputes, and if thou have spoken once, thou wilt
speak no more, what thou art who is as clay formed
out of nothing, what he is who is the former, and
hath not the Potter power over the clay? Confide
but how great wickednesse it is, so much as to ques-
tion him, or ask an account of his matters, after
you have found his will to be the cause of all things,
then to enquire further into a cause of his will which
is alone the self-rule of righteousness, it is to seek
something above his will, and to reduce his Majesty
into the order of creatures, it is the most abominable
usurpation and sacrilege, for both it robes him of
his royal prerogative, and instates the base foot-stool
into his Throne: But know, that certainly God will
overcome when he is judged, *Psal. 51. 6.* If thou
judge him, he will condemn thee, if thou oppose
his absolute and holy Decrees, he will hold thee
bound by them to thy condemnation, he needs no
other defence, but to call out thy own conscience
against thee, and bind thee over to destruction, there-
fore, as one saith well, *Let the rashnesse of men be
strained from seeking that which is not, lest peradven-
ture they find that which is; Seek not a reason of his
purposes, lest peradventure thou find thy own damnation
and damnation infolded in them.*

God hath made all things for his own glory. 189

Paul mentions two objections of carnal and fleshly wisdom against this Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, which indeed contain the sum of all that is vented and invented even to this day, to defile the spotlesse truth of God: All the whisperings of men tend to one of two, either to justify themselves, or to accuse God of unrighteousnesse; And shall any do it and be guiltlesse. I confesse some oppose this Doctrine not so much out of an intention of accusing God, as out of a preposterous and ignorant zeal for God, even as *Jobs* friends did speak much for God, nay, but it was not well spoken, they did but speak wickedly for him: Some speak much to the defence of his righteousness and holinesse, and under pretence of that plea, make it inconsistent with these, to fore-ordain to life or death, without the foresight of their carriage; But shall they speak wickedly for God, or will he accept their person? He who looks into the secrets of their heart, knowes the rise and bottom of such defences and appologies for his Holinesse, to be partly self-love, partly narrow and limited thoughts of him, drawing him down to the determinations of his own greatest enemy carnal reason. Since men will ascribe him no righteousness, but such a one of their own shaping, conformed to their own model, do they not indeed rob him of his Holinesse and Righteousnesse.

I find two or three objections which may be reduced to this Head. First, It seems unrighteousness with God, to predestinate men to eternal death, without their own evil deserving, or any fore-thought of it, that before any man had a being, God should have been in his Counsel, fitting so many to destruction: Is it not a strange mocking of the creatures, to punish them for that sin and corruption unto which by his eternal Counsel they were fore-ordained? This is even that which *Paul* objects to himself, Is there unrighteousnesse with God? Is it not unrighteousnesse to hate *Esau* before he deserve it? Is he
not

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Not unrighteous to adjudge him to death before
do evil? vers. 14. Let *Paul* answer for us, God
bid; why, there needs no more answer, but
thoughts or words which may in the least
upon his holiness are abomination; though
could not tell how it is righteous and holy with
to do, yet this we must hold, that it is. It is
own property to comprehend the reason of
Counsel, it is our duty to believe what he reve
them, without further inquiry, he telleth us
thus it is, clearly in this Chapter; This far the
must believe, he telleth us not how it is, there
ther we should not desire to learn; God in his
silence of, that may put us to silence, and may
conceive that there is a depth to be admired
founded. Yet he goeth a little further, and in
as high as can be, to Gods will, he hath merited
whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth
further he cannot go, for there is nothing above
we may descend from this, but we cannot ascend
rise above it. But is this any answer to the
ment? A Sophister could presse it further, and
advantage from that very ground, What? is not
to establish a meer tyranny in the Lord, that he
all things of meer will and pleasure, distributer
wards and punishments without previous con
tion of mens carriage? But here we must stand
go no further then the Scripture walk with us,
over reasons or causes may be assigned, yet cer
we must at length come up thither, all things
because he so willed, and why, he willed we sh
not ask a reason, because his will is supream re
and the very self-rule of all righteousness. There
fore if once we know his will, we should pre
conclude that it is most righteous and holy. If
evation of the fore-knowledge of mans sins and
pertinency had been found solid, certainly *Paul* w
have answered so, and would not have had his re
to the absolute will and pleasure of God, w

God hath made all things for his own glory. 191
seems to perplex it more, but he knew well, that
there could nothing of that kind, whether good or
evil either actually be, without his will, or be to
come without the determination of that same will,
and so could not be foreseen without the Counsel of
his will upon it, and therefore it had been but a poor
shift, to have refuge to that starting hole of fore-
knowledge, out of which he must presently flee, to
the will and pleasure of God, and so he betakes him
straight way to that he must hold at, and opposes
his will to mens doings. *It is not of him that wil-*
lith, &c. if he had meant only that *Jacob and Esau*
had actually done neither good nor evil, He needed
not return to the sanctuary of Gods will, for still it
might be said, it is of him that runs and wills, and
not of Gods will as the first original, because their
good and evil foreseen, did move him to such love
and hatred. It is all alike of works and of men, whe-
ther these works be present or to come: Therefore
I would advise every one of you what ever ye con-
ceive of his judgement or mercy, if he have shewed
mercy to you, O then rest not in thy self, but arise
and ascend till thou come to the height of his eternal
purpose, and if thou conceive thy sin and misery
and judgement, thou may go up also to his holy
counsels for the glory of his name, and silence thy self
with them, but it shal be most expedient for thee in
the thought of thy miseries to return alwayes with-
in, and to search the corruption of thy nature, which
may alone make thee hateful enough to God. If thou
search thy own conscience, it will stop thy mouth,
and make thee guilty before God, let not the thought
of his eternal Counsels diminish the conviction of
thy guilt, or the hatred of thy self for sin and cor-
ruption, but dwell more constantly upon this, be-
cause thou art called and commanded so to do. One
thing remains fixed, though he have fore-ordained
men to death, yet none shal be damned till his consci-
ence be forced to say that he is worthy of it a thou-
sand times.

There

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There is another whispering and suggestion
wicked hearts of men against the predestination
God, which insinuates that God is an acceptor of
sons, and so accuses him of partial and unrighteous
dealing, because he dealeth not equally with all.
do ye not say this within yourselves, if he be
guilty, why doth he not punish all? Why doth he
spare some? And if he look upon all men in his
and primitive thought of them, as neither
good nor evil, why doth he not have mercy on all?
But is thy eye evil because he is good, may he
do with his own as he plealeth? Because he is
mercifull to some souls, shall men be displeased
well to be angry? or because he of his own
grace extends it, shall he be bound by a rule to
show it with all? Is not he both just and merciful, and
not meet that both be shewed forth? if he p
thee, thou cannot complain, for thou deserves
he shew mercy, why should any quarrel, for
free and undeserved grace, by saving some he sh
his grace, by destroying others he shewes wh
deserve. God is so far from being an acceptor of
sons according to their qualifications and cond
that he finds nothing in any creature to cast the
balance of his choice; if he did choose men for
works sake, or outward priviledges, and re
others for the want of these, then it might be cha
on him, but he rather goes over all these, and
findes none of these, in his first view of men
beholds them all alike, and nothing to determin
minde to one, more then another, so that his c
proceedeth wholly from within his own breast
will have mercy on whom I will. But then th
our hearts object against the righteousness of
that this fatall chain of predestination overru
exhortations and perswasions to godlinesse, all
and diligence in well doing; for thus do many
faint souls conceive, *If he be in one minde, an
can turn him?* then what need I pray, since he

God hath made all things for his own glory. 193

Already determined what shall be, and what shall become of me, his purpose will take effect whether I pray, or pray none, my prayer will not make him change his mind, and if it be in his mind he will do it; If he have appointed to save, saved we will be, live as we list, if he have appointed us to death, die we must, live as we can. Therefore men in this desperate estate, throw themselves headlong into all manner of iniquity, and that with quietnesse and peace. Thus do many souls perish upon the stumbling stone laid in Sion, and wrest the Truths and Counsels of God to their own destruction, even quite contrary to their true intent and meaning; *Paul, Ephes. 1. 4. speaketh another language, He hath chosen us in him that we should be holy and without blame.* His eternal Counsel of life is so far from loosening the reins to mens lusts, that it is the only certain foundation of holinesse, it is the very spring and fountain from whence our Sanctification floweth, by an infallible course. This chain of Gods counsels concerning us, hath all so linked together, the end and the means, glory and grace, happinesse and holiness, that there is no destroying of them, *Without holinesse it is impossible to see God*, so that these who expect the one without any desire of, and endeavour after the other, they are upon a vain attempt to loose the links of this eternal chain, *Rom. 8.* It is the only Eternal choosing love of God, which separated so many souls from the common misery of men, it is that only which in time doth appear, and rise as it were from under ground, in the streams or fruits of Sanctification, and if the ordinance of life stand, so shall the ordinance of fruits, *Joh. 15. 16. Ephes. 2. 10.* if he have appointed thee to life, it is certain he hath also ordained thee to fruits, and chosen thee to be holy, so that what ever soul casts by the study of this, there is too grosse a brand of perdition upon its fore-head; It is true, all is already determined with him, and he is incapable of any change, or

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shadow of turning ; nothing then wants , but
in one mind about it , and thy prayer cannot tuff
yet a godly soul will pray with more confidence
cause it knows that as he hath determined up
its wants and receipts , so he hath appointed
be the very way of obtaining what it wants ,
the way of familiarity and grace , he takes w
own , to make them call , and he performs his
pose in answer to their cry ; But I suppose
were nothing to be expected by prayer , yet
that is not the thing thou should look to , but
is required of thee as thy duty , to do that
out of regard to his Majesty , though thou
never profit by it , this is true obedience to serve
for his own pleasure , though we had no expecta
of advantage by it , certainly he doth not require
supplications for this end to move him ; and in
his affections toward thee , but rather as a testim
of thy homage and subjection to him , there
though they cannot make him of another mind
he is , or hasten performance before his purpos
time , so that in reality they have no influence
him , yet in praying , and praying diligently ,
declares thy obligation to him and respect to his
jesty , which is all thou hath to look to , and to
mit the event solely to his good pleasure.

The 2. Objection *Paul* mentioneth , tends to
flie men , *Why then doth he yet find fault , who*
resisted his will ? Since by his will he hath chained
with an inevitable necessity to sin , what can we
they cannot wrestle with him ; why then doth
condemn and accuse them ? *But who art thou , O*
who disputes against God ? as if *Paul* had said ,
art a man and so am I , why then looks thou for
answer from me , let us rather both consider who
we speak of , whom thou accuses , and whom I
send , it is God ; what art thou then to charge
or what am I so to clear him ? Believing ignorance
better then presumptuous knowledge , especially
these

these forbidden secrets, in which it is more concerning to be ignorant with faith and admiration, then to know with presumption; dispute thou, O man, I will wonder, reply thou, I will believe, doth it become thee, the clay to speak so to thy Former, Why hast thou made me thus? Let the consideration of the absolute right and dominion of God over us, more then any creature hath over another, yea, over themselves, let that restrain us, and keep us within bounds. He may do with us what he pleaseth, for his own honour and praise, but it is his will that we should leave all the blame to our selves, and rather behold the evident cause of our destruction in our sin, which is nearer us, then to search into a secret and incomprehensible cause in Gods Counsel.

Heb. 11. 3. *Through Faith we understand that the worlds were made, &c. with Gen. 1.*

WE are come down from the Lords purposes and decrees to the execution of them, which is partly in the works of Creation, and partly in the works of Providence, the Lord having resolved upon it to manifest his own glory, did, in that due and predeterminat time apply his own power to this business, having in great wisdom conceived a frame of the world in his mind from all eternity, he at length brings it forth, and makes it visible. We shall not insist upon the particular story of it, as it is set down in general, but only point at some things for our instruction.

First, ye see who is the Maker of all things, of whom all things visible and invisible are, it is God. And by this he useth to distinguish himself from all idols,

idols, and the vanities of the Nations, that
 that self-being, who gave all things a being,
 made the Heavens and the Earth. This is even
 most glorious manifestation of an invisible and
 nal being: These things that are made shew
 forth, If a man were travelling into a far Countrey
 and wandered into a wilderness where he could find
 no inhabitants, but only houses, villages, and cities
 built, he would straight way conceive, there
 been some work-men at this, this hath not been done
 casually, but by the arte of some reasonable creature.
 How much more may we conceive when we look
 the fabrick of this world, how the heavens
 stretched out for a tent to cover them that dwell
 the earth, and the earth settled and established on
 firm foundation for men and living creatures to
 on, how all are done in wisdom and discretion,
 cannot but straight way imagine that there must
 some curious and wise contriver, and mighty Crea-
 tor of these things. It is here said, that *by*
we understand that the worlds were made, indeed
 only in the Word of God gives true and distinct
 derstanding of it: Innumerable have been the w
 derings and mistakes of the wise of the world abo
 this matter, wanting this lamp and light of the W
 of God, which alone gives a true and perfect acco
 of this thing, many strange dotages and fancies h
 they fallen into; yet certain it is that there is so m
 of the glory of God ingraven without on the cr
 ture, and so much reason imprinted on the souls
 men within, that (if it were not for that judi
 plague of the Lords darkning their understanding
 who do not glorifie him in as far as they know him
 no man could seriously and soberly consider on
 visible world, but they would be constrained to co
 ceive an invisible God: would not every one thi
 within himself all these things, so excellent as th
 are, cannot be out of chance, neither could th
 make themselves, so that of necessity they must ow
 what

what they are, to something beside themselves, and of this it is certain, that it cannot have its original from any other thing, else there should be no end, therefore it must be some supream being, that is from no other, and of which are all things.

But next consider, when these things were made: *in the beginning*, and what beginning is that? certainly the beginning of the creation, and of time, to exclude eternity; what ever may be said of that subtilty that God might have created the world from all eternity, for it appeareth even in created things, that there is no necessity of the precedent existence of the cause, since in the same instant that many things are into, in the same do they bring forth their effects, as the Sun in the first instant of its creation did illuminate; yet certainly we believe from the Word of the Lord, that the world is actually but of a few thousand years standing, six are yet not run out since the first creating word was spoken, and since the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the waters; and this we know also, that if it had pleased his Majesty, he might have created the world many thousand years before that, so that it might have been at this day of ten hundreth times ten thousand years standing, and he might have given it as many years, as there are numbers of men and Angels beasts, yea, and pickles of sand upon the Sea coast; But it was his good pleasure, that that very point of time in which it was created, should be the beginning of time, and from that he gives us a history of the world, upon which the Church of God may rest, and so seek no other God but the God that made these Heavens and Earth.

This will not satisfy the ungodly curiosity and vanity of mens spirits, who will reproach the Maker for not applying sooner to his work, and sitting idle, such an unmeasurable space of Eternity: Men wonder what he could be doing all that time, (if we may call it time which hath no beginning) and how he

was imployed, I beseech you restrain such thoughts in you, with the fear of his glorious and incomprehensible Majesty, who gives no account of his doings; It is enough that this is his good pleasure; begin then, and he concealeth his reasons to preserve the sobriety of our faith, that all men may leave absolute and simple stouping to his Majesties pleasure. Remember that which a godly man answered a wanton curious wit, who in scorn demanded the same of him, *He was preparing hell for curious and proud fools*, said he: let us then keep our hearts with a bridle, and repress their boundlesse wanderings within bounds, lest we by looking upward before the beginning of the world, to see what God was doing, fall head-long into the eternal pit of destruction, and into the hands of the living God. God hath shewed himself marvellously these thousand years in the upholding this world, if we did consider these continued and repeated testimonies of his glory, we would be overwhelmed with it, if we find, though we search no further, and suppose we would please ourselves to imagine, that it had been created many years before, yet that doth not silence or stop the insolence of mens minds, for many wayes might be enquired, what the Lord was doing before that time? For eternity is as immensurable before these multiplied thousands of years, as before naked six; Let our imagination sit down to submit from Eternity, as many thousands as it can multiply by all the varieties and numbers in the world, there is nothing abated from Eternity, it is as infinite in extent before that, as before the present fix thousand, and yet we may conceive that the Lord hath purposed in the beginning of the world to declare more manifestly to our understanding his Eternity, his self-sufficiency and liberty; His Eternity; when we hear of how short standing the creature is, we may go upward to God himself, and his everlasting being before the foundation of it were laid.

may shine forth more brightly to our admiration, when we can stretch our conceptions so, immensurably as far beyond the beginning of the world, and yet God is still beyond the outmost reach of our imagination (for who can find out the beginning of that which hath not a beginning to be found out) and our most extended apprehensions falls infinitely short of the dayes of the ancient of dayes; O how glorious then must his being be, and how boundlesse? His self-sufficiency and perfection doth herein appear, that from such an unconceivable space, he was as perfect and blessed in himself as now, the creatures addeth nothing to his perfection, or satisfaction, he was as well pleased with his own all-comprehending-being, and with the very thought and purpose of making this world as now he is, when it is made, the Idea of it in his minde gave him as great contentment as the work it self when it is done: O to conceive this aright, it would fill a soul with astonishing and ravishing thoughts of his blessednesse: Poor men weary if they be not one way or other imployed without, so indigent are all creatures at home, that they would weary if they went not abroad without themselves, but to think how absolutely God is well pleased with himself, and how all imaginable perfections can adde nothing to his eternal self-complacency and delight in his own being, it would certainly ravish a soul to delight in God also: and as his self-sufficiency doth herein appear, so his liberty and freedom is likewise manifested in it, if the world had been eternal, who would have thought that it was free for his Majesty to make it or not? But that it had flowed from his glorious being with as natural and necessary a resultance, as light from the body of the Sun; But now it appeareth to all men, that for his pleasure they are made and were created, that it was simply the free and absolute motion of his will that gave a being to all things which he could withhold at his pleasure, or so long as he pleased.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, we have it to consider in what *commodities* he made all these things; *very good*, and that to declare his goodnesse and wisdom: the creature may well be called a large volume extended and spread out before the eyes of all men to be seen and read of all. How certain if these things, all of them in their order, and harmonies, or any of them in their beings and qualities, were considered in relation to Gods Majesty, they would teach and instruct the fool and the wise both, in the knowledge of God. How many improvements hath he made in the creatures which reflect upon any seeing eye the very Image of God: to consider what a vast and hudge frame the heavens and the earth are, and yet but one Throne to his Majesty, the footstool whereof is this earth wherein vain men erect many palaces; to consider what a multitude of creatures, what variety of fowls in the heaven, and what multiplicity of beasts upon the earth, what armies (as Moses speaks, Chap. 2. 1.) and yet that none of them all are uselesse, but all of them having some special ends, and purposes they serve for, so that there is no discord nor disorder, no superfluity nor want in all this monarchy of the world, all of them conspire together in such a discord, or disagreeing harmony, to one great purpose, to declare the wisdom of him who *made every thing beautifull in its time*, and every thing most fit and apposite for the use it was created for; so that *the whole earth is full of his goodnesse*, he maketh every creature good one to another to supply one anothers necessities, and then notwithstanding of so many different natures and dispositions between elements and things composed of them, yet all these contrarieties have such a commision, and are so moderated by his supream arte, that they make up joyntly one excellent and sweet harmony or beautifull proportion in the world: O how wise must he be who alone contrived it all? We can do nothing except we have some patern and cobby before us, but now upon this ground which God hath left man

man may fancy many superstructures; But when he stretched out the Heaven, and laid the foundation of the earth, *Who being his counsellour taught him?* At whom did his Spirit take counsel? Certainly none of all these things would have entred in the heart of man to consider or contrive, *Isai. 40. 12, 13.* Some wonder spirits do gaze upon the hudge and prodigious pieces of creation, as Whales and Elephants, &c. but a wise *Solomon* will go to the School of the Ant to learn the wisdom of God, and chuse out such a simple and mean creature for the object of his admiration, certainly there are wonders in the smallest and most inconsiderable creatures which faith can contemplate: O the curious ingines and draughts of the finger of God, in the composition of flees, bees, flowers, &c. Men ordinarily admireth more some extraordinary things, but the truth is the whole course of nature is one continued wonder, and that greater then any of the Lords works without the line; The straight and regular line of the wisdom of God (who in one constant course and tenor hath ordained the actions of all his creatures) comprehendeth more wonders and mysteries, as the course of the Sun, the motion of the Sea, the hanging of the earth in the empty place upon nothing, these we say are the wonders indeed, and comprehendeth something in them which all the wonders of Egypt and the wildernesse cannot parallel. But it is the stupid security of men, that are onely awakened by some new and unusual passages of Gods works, without that straight line of nature.

Then fourthly, look upon the power of God in making all of nothing, which is expressed here in *Heb. 11.* there is no artificier but he must have matter, ere his arte will fail him, and he can do nothing: the Mason must have timber and stones laid to his hand, or he cannot build a house, the Gold-smith must have Gold or Silver or he can make a Cup or a Ring, take the most curious and quick inventer of them all, they must have some matter to work upon,
or

or their knowledge is no better then ignorance, that they can do is to give some shape or form, to fashion that in some new model, which had a being before, so that what ever men have done in the world their works are made up of these things which appear, and art, and skil to form and fashion that which was before, which before was in another mould and fashion, but he needs not sit idle for want of matter, and therefore in the beginning he made heaven and earth, not as they now are, but he made first the matter and substance of this universe, but it was yet a rude and confused *Chaos* or masse, all in a lump without difference, but then his Majesty shew'd his wisdom and arte, his excellent invention, in the following dayes of the Creation, in the ordering and beatifying and forming the world as it is, that his power might be the more known; For how easie is it for him to do all this? There needs no more for it but a word, let it be, and it is, *He spake, and it was done, He commanded, and it stood fast*, no word pronounced and audible composed of Letters and Syllables, mistake it not so, but a word inwardly formed as it were in his infinite Spirit, even the inclination and beck of his will sufficeth for his great works: ye see what labour and pains we have in our businesse, how we toil and sweat about it, with wrestlings and strivings in all things we do, but behold what a great work is done without pains or travel, it is a laborious thing to travel through a parcel of this earth, which is yet but as the part of the universe, it is troublesome to lift or carry a little peece of stone or clay, its a toil even to look upward and number the stars of heaven, but it is no toil, no difficult thing to his Majesty, to stretch out these Heavens in such an infinite compasse, so large as the circumference of them is, yet it is as easie to him to compasse them, as it is to us to take a finger-length or two, it is no difficulty to him to take up hills and mountains as the dust of the ball.

in his hand, and weigh them in scales: hath he not chained the vast and huge masse of the weighty earth and sea in the midst of the empty place without a supporter, without foundations or pillars, *He hangeth it on nothing*; what is it I pray you that supporteth the clouds? Who is it that bindeth up their waters in such a way that the cloud is not rent under them, even though there be more abundance of water in them then is in all the rivers and waters round about us? *Job 26. 7, 8.* Who is it that restrains and sets bounds to the sea, that the waters thereof though they roar, yet do not overflow the land? But this Almighty Jehovah whose decree and commandment is the very compasse, the bulwark over which they cannot flow, and all this he doth with more facility then men can speak, if there were a creature that could do all things by speaking, that were a strange power, but yet that creature might be wearied of speaking much, *but he speaketh and it is done*, his word is a creating word of power which maketh things that are not to be, and there is no wearying of him besides, for he is Almighty and cannot faint, but why then did he take six dayes for his work? Might he not with one word of his power have commanded this world to issue out of his omnipotent vertue thus perfect as it is? What needed all this compasse? Why took he six dayes, who in a moment could have done it all with as much facility? Indeed herein the Lord would have us to adore his wisdom, as well as his power, he proceedeth from more imperfect things to more perfect, from a confused *Chaos*, to a beautifull world, from motion to rest, to teach man to walk through this wilderness and valley of tears, this shapelesse world, into a more beatifull habitation, through the tossings of time, into an eternal Sabbath of rest, whether their works shall follow them, and they shall rest from their labours: He would teach us to take a stedfast look of his work, and that we should be busied all the

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the day of our pilgrimage and sojourning, in consideration of the glorious characters of God in the works of his hands, we see that it is but peevish looks and glances of Gods glory we take in the pictures, but the Lord would have us to make it our work and businesse all the week through, as it is his to make them; He would in this teach us the loving care of men, who would not create man, if he had made for him so glorious an house, replenished with all good things; It had been a darksome and irksome life to have lived in the first *Chaos*, without light, but he hath stretched over him the heavens his Tent, and set lights in them to distinguish the day and seasons, and ordained the waters their proper bounds, and peculiar channels, and then made the earth to bring forth all manner of fruit, and now all is thus disposed, then he creates man. To God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, be glory and praise.

Heb. 11. 3. and Heb. 1. 14. *Are they all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister, &c.*

THere is nothing more generally known than this, that God at the beginning made the heaven and the earth, and all the things in them, the upper or the coelestiall, the lower or sublunarie world, but yet there is one thing so little believed or laid to heart: By far the most understand that the worlds were made. It is one of the first Articles of the Creed indeed, *Father Almighty Maker of Heaven and Earth*, but I fear that Creed is not written in the Tables of flesh, that is the hearts of men. There is a twofold mistake among men about this point of believing, some, and the commoner sort

think it is no other thing then simply to know such a thing, and not to question it, to hear it, and not to contradict it, or object against it; Therefore they do flatter themselves in their own eyes, and do account themselves to have faith in God, because they can say over all the Articles of their Belief, they think the Word is true, and they never doubted of it; But I beseech you consider how greatly you mistake a main matter of weighty concernment? If you will search it as before the Lord, you will find you have no other belief of these things, then children use to have whom you teach to think or say any thing, there is no other ground of your not questioning these truths of the Gospel, but because you never consider on them, and so they passe for current; Do not deceive yourselves, *with the heart man believes*, it is a heart-businesse, a soul-matter, no light and uselesse opinion, or empty expression, which you have learned from a child: You say, you believe in God the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and so say children who doubt no more of it then ye, and yet in iadnesse they do not retire within their own hearts to think what a one he is, they do not remember him in the works of his hands, there is no more remembrance of that true God, then if no such thing were known; So it is among you, you would think we wronged you, if we said ye believed not that God made the world, and yet certainly all men have not this faith, whereby they understand truely in their heart, the power, and wisdom, and goodnesse of God appearing in it, that is the gift of God only given to them that shall be saved. If I should say that you believe not the most common principles of Religion, you would think it hard, and yet there is no doubt of it, that the most common truths are least believed, and the reason is plain, because men have learned them by rote, and there is none that question them, and therefore very few ever in iadnesse and in earnest consider of them: You say, that

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God made Heaven and Earth, but how often do you think on that God? And how often do you thank him with admiration? Do ye at all wonder at the glory of God, when you gaze on his works? Is not this volume alwayes observant before your eyes, every thing shewing and declaring this glorious Maker, yet who is it that taketh more notice of it, than if he were not at all; such is the general stupidity of men, that they never ponder and digest these things in their heart, till their soul receive the fullness of the glory and greatnesse of the invisible God, which shines most brightly on these things that are visible, and be in some measure transformed in their minds, and conformed to these glorious appearances of him, which are engraven in great characters in nature that do at all appear. There is another mistake peculiar to some, especially the Lords people, they think faith is limited to some few particulars more unknown and hid truths and mysteries of the Gospel. Ye think that it is only true believing to embrace some special Gospel-truths, which the multitude of people know nothing of, as the terms of the Covenant of Grace and of Works, &c. And other common principles, of Gods making and ruling the world, you think that a common thing is to believe them. But saith the Apostle, *By faith we understand that the worlds were made*, it is that faith spoken of in the end of the 10. Chapter, which the just shall live: So then, here is a powerful saving faith, to believe with the heart in God the Creator, and Father Almighty, to take a view of Gods Almighty power and sufficient goodnesse, of infinite wisdom shining in the fabrick of the world, and that with delight and admiration at such a glorious Fountain-being; to rise up to his Majesty by the degrees of his creatures, this is the climbing and ascending nature of Faith. You see how much the Saints in the Old Testament were in this, and certainly they had more excellent and becoming thoughts

thoughts of God then we. It should make Christians ashamed, that both Heathens who had no other Book opened to them, but that of Nature, did read it more diligently then we; And that the Saints of old, who had not such a plain testimony of God as we now have, yet did learn more out of the Book of the Creature, then we do both out of it and the Scriptures: We look on all things with such a careless eye, and do not observe what may be found of God in them: I think verily there are many Christians, and Ministers of the Gospel, who do not ascend into these high and ravishing thoughts of God, in his being and working, as would become even meer Naturalists; How little can they speak of his Majesty, or think as it becomes his transcendent glory. There is little in Sermons or discourses that holds out any singular admiring thoughts of a Deity; but in all these we are so common and careless, as if he were an Idol.

It is not in vain that it is expressed thus, *By faith we know that the worlds were made*, for certainly the firm believing and pondering of this one truth, would be of great moment and use to a Christian in all his journey. You may observe in what stead it is to the Saints in Scripture, this raiseth up a soul to high thoughts and suitable conceptions of his glorious Name, and so conforms the worship of his Majesty unto his excellency, it puts the stamp of Divinity upon it; and spiritualizes the thoughts and affections so, as to put a true difference between the true God, and the gods that made not the Heavens and the Earth. Alas, the worship of many Christians speaks out no diviner or higher object then a creature, it is so cold-rife, so formall and empty, so vain and wandering, there is no more respect testified unto him, then we would give to some eminent person: You find in the Scripture how the strain of the Saints affections and devotion riseth, when they take up God in his absolute Supremacy above the creatures,

tures, and look on him as the alone fountain that is worth the name of perfection in the soul in that consideration cannot choose but unto him the most eminent seat in the heart, and ther these affections which are scattered after creatures, into one channel, to powre them out him who is all in all, and hath all that which is lost in the creatures in an eminent degree. There know what you are formed for, to shew forth praise, to gather and take up from the creature the fruits of his praise, and offer them up to his Majesty, this was the end of man, and this is the of a Christian, you are made for this, and you redeemed for this, to read upon the volumes of works, and Word, and from thence extract songs of praise to his Majesty.

As this would be of great moment to the worshipping of God, and to the exercise of holinesse; so it is most effectual to the establishing of a soul in the confidence of the promises of God. When a soul by faith understands the worlds made by God, then it relies with confidence upon that same Word of God, as a word of power, and hopes against hope: There are many things in Christians way betwixt and glory, which look insuperable, thou art often emptied into nothing and stript naked of all encouragements, and then nothing remaining but the word of Gods promise to thee and to the Church, which seems contrary to sense and reason; Now, I say, if thou do indeed believe that the world was made by God, then of all question thou may silence all thy fears with this one thought; God created this whole frame out of nothing, he commanded the light to shine out of darknesse, then certainly he can give a being to his own promises; is not his word of promise as effectual as his word of command? This is a grand encouragement of the Church, both offered by God, *Isa.* from 40. Chapter, and made use of

his Saints, as *David, Hezekiah, &c.* What is it would disquiet a soul if it were reposed on this Rock of Creating Power and Faithfulness? This would alwayes sound in its ears, faint not, weary not *Jacob, I am God, and none else the portion of Jacob is not like others*, be it inward or outward difficulties, suppose hell and earth combined together, let all the enemies of a soul, or of the Church assemble, here is one for all, the God that made the Heaven and the Earth can speak, and it is done, command and it stands fast: *He creates peace, and who then can make trouble, when he gives quietnesse to a Nation, or to a person.* Almighty power works in Saints, and for Saints, let us trust in him.

Gen. 1. 26, 27. *And God said let us make man after our own image, with Eph. 4. 24. and Heb. 3. 10.*

WHile we descend from the meditation of the glory of God shining in the Heavens, in Sun, Moon and Stars, unto the consideration of the Lords framing of man after this manner, we may fall into admiration with the Psalmist, *Psal. 8. Lord what is man that thou art mindfull of him, or the Son of man that thou shouldst remember him.* It might indeed drown us in wonder, and astonish us, to think what special notice he hath taken of such a creature from the very beginning, and put more respect upon him then upon all the more excellent works of his hands; you find here the creation of man expressed in other terms, then was used before, He said, *let there be light, and it was, let there be dry land.* But it is not such a simple.

simple word as that, *but let us make man according to our image*, as if God had called a consultation of it, what was there any more difficulty in this in the rest of his works? needed he any advice about his frame and constitution? no certainly, there was great works of power, as curious pieces of arte and wisdom, which was instantly upon his word, he is not a man that he should ask or consult, as there is no difficulty nor impediment in the way of his power, (he doth all that he pleaseth, *ad nutum*, at his very word or nod, so easily impossibilities to him) so there is nothing hard to his wisdom, no knot but it can loose, nothing curious or exquisit, but he can as curiously consider it, as the most common and grosse pieces of the creation, and therefore, *He is wonderfull in counsel, excellent in working*: But ye have here expressed were a counsel of the Holy and blessed Trinity about mans Creation, to signifie to us, what peculiar respect he puts upon that creature, and what special notice he takes of us, that of his own free pure and good pleasure he was to single and chooseth man from among all other creatures, for the more eminent demonstration of his glorious attributes of grace, mercy, and justice upon him; and likewise point out the excellency that God did stamp upon man in his creation beyond the rest of the creatures, as the Apostle shewes the excellency of Christ above Angels, *To which of the angels said he at any time, art my Son?* Heb. 1. 5. So we may say, of which of the creatures said he at any time, come, let us make them in our image, after our likenesse? Ought this make us listen to hear, earnest to know what man once was, how magnified of God above the works of his hands? There is a great desire in men to search into their original, and to go backward the dark footsteps of antiquity, especially if they be put in expectation of attaining any honourable or memorable extraction? How will

love to hear of the worth of their Ancestours? But what a stupidity doth possesse the most part in relation to the high fountain and head of all, that they do not aime so high as *Adam*, to know the very estate of humane nature: Hence it is, that the most part of people ly still astonished, or rather stupid and senselesse after this great fall of man, because they never look upward to the place and dignity from whence man did fall. It is certain you will never rightly understand your selves, or what ye are, till ye know first what man was made? You cannot imagine what your present misery is, till you once know what that felicity was, in which man was made (*let us make man in our image*) some have called man, a little world, a compend of the world, because he hath Heaven and Earth as it were married together in him; two most remote and distant natures, the dust of the earth, and the immortall spirit, which is called the breath of God, sweetly linked and conjoynd together, with a disposition and inclination one to another. The Lord was in this peece of workmanship as it were to give a narrow and short compend of all his works, and so did associate in one peece with marvellous wisdom, being, living, moving, sense and reason, which are scattered abroad in the other creatures, so that a man carries these wonders about with him, which he admires without him. At his bare and simple word this huge frame of the world started out of nothing, but in this he acts the part of a cunning Artificer, *let us make man*, he makes rather then creates, first raises the walts of flesh, buildeth the house of the body with all its Organs, all its rooms, and then he puts in a noble and divine guest to dwell in it, *He breaths in it the breath of life*, he incloseth as it were, an Angel within it, and marrieth these two together into the most admirable union and communion that can be imagined, so that they make up one man.

But that which the Lord looks most into in this work,

work, and would have us most to consider, is the image of himself that he did imprint on man (*make man in our own Image*) there was no creature but it had some ingravings of God upon it, curious draughts and lineaments of his Power, Wisdom, and Goodnesse upon it, and therefore the Scriptures are said, *to shew forth his glory, &c.* But whatever they have, it is but the lower part of that image, some dark shadows and resemblances of him, that which is the last of his works, he makes according to his own image, *tanquam ab ultima materia* he therein gives out himself to be read and seen of men as in a glasse, other creatures are made as it were according to the similitude of his footstep, *Ad similitudinem vestigii*, but man, *ad similitudinem faciei* according to the likenesse of his face, (*in our image after our likenesse,*) It is true, there is one only, Jesus Christ his Son, who is *the brightnesse of his glory, and the expresse substantial image of his person*, who resembleth him perfectly, and throughly in all properties, so that he is *alter idem*, another-self, equal in nature, properties, and operations, so like that he is one with him, so that it is rather an oneness than a likenesse; but man he created according to his own Image, and gave him to have some likenesse to himself, likenesse I say, not samenesse, or onenesse. That is high indeed to be like God, The mention and expression of it imports some strange thing, how could man be like God, who is infinite, incomprehensible, whose glory is not communicable to another? It is true indeed, in these incommunicable properties he hath not only, no equal, but none like him, in these he is to be adored and admired as infinitely transcending all created perfections and conceptions; but yet in others he hath been pleased to hold forth himself to be imitated and followed, and that this might be done, he first stamps them upon man in his first moulding of him, and if ye would know what these are particularly, the Apostle prescribes

representeth them, Col. 3. 10. In knowledge, in righteousness,
and holiness, Eph. 4. 24. This is the image of him who
created him, which the Creator stamped on man, that
he might seek him, and set him apart for himself to
keep communion with him, and to bless him. There
is a Spirit given to man with a capacity to know, and
to will, And here is a draught and lineament of Gods
face, which is not ingraven on any sensitive creature;
it is on the most noble and excellent operations of
life, in which a man is most above beasts, to reflect
upon himself, and to know himself and his Creator:
There are natural instincts given to other things, na-
tural propensions to these things that are convenient
to their own nature, but none of them have so much
as a capacity to know what they are, or what they
have, they cannot frame a notion of him who gave
them a being, but are only proportionat to the dis-
cerning of some sensible things, and can reach no
further: he hath limited the eye within colours and
light; he hath set a bounds to the ear that it cannot
go without sounds, and so to every Sense he hath as-
signed his own proper stance, in which it moveth;
but he teacheth man knowledge, and he enlargeth the
Sphear of his understanding beyond visible or sensible
things, to things invisible, to spirits, and this capa-
city he hath put in the soul to know all things, and
it self among the rest; the eye discerns light, but
sees not it self, but he gives a Spirit to man to know
himself, and his God: and then there is a willing
power in the soul by which it diffuses it self
towards any thing that is conceived as good;
the understanding directing, and the will commanding
according to its direction, and then the whole facul-
ties and senses obeying such commands, which makes
up an excellent draught of the image of God: There
was a sweet proportion and harmony in Adam, all
was in due place, and subordination; the motions of
immortall man did begin within, the lamp of reason
did shine and give light to it, and till that went be-
fore,

fore, there was no stirring, no choosing, no refusing, and when reason which was one spark of the divine nature, or a ray of Gods light reflected into the soul of man, when once that did appeared the discerning of good and evil, this power was the soul to apply the whole man accordingly, choose the good and refuse the evil, it had not a lively resemblance of God to have a power knowing and willing simply, unlesse these had beautified and adorned with supernatural and divine graces of spiritual Light and Holinesse, and Righteousnesse, these make up the lively colour and compleat the image of God upon the soul.

There was a divine Light which did shine in the understanding, ever till sin interposed and obscured it, and from the light of Gods countenance the sweet heat, and warmnesse of holinesse and rightnesse in the affections proceed, so that there was nothing but purity and cleannesse in the soul, no darkness of ignorance, no muddinesse of carnal affections, but the soul pure and transparant, to receive refreshing and enlightning rayes of Gods glorious countenance, and this was the very face and beauty of the soul, it is that only that is the beauty and excellency of the creature conformity to God, and was throughout, in understanding and affection, understanding conformed to his understanding, discerning between good and evil, and conformed it both to be, for it was but a ray of that Sun, a stream from that Fountain of wisdom, and a light derived from that primitive light of Gods understanding; and the will did sympathize as much with his will, approving and choosing what he approved, and refusing that which he hated: *Idem velle atque idem nolle ea demum firma est amicitia*, that was the conjunction and it is more strait then any tye among men, there was not two wills, they were as it were one, the love of God reflecting into the soul, did as it were carry the soul back again unto him, and that was

conforming principle which fashioned the whole man without and within to his likeness, and to his obedience: Thus man was formed for communion with God, this likeness behoved to be, or they could not joy as friends.

But now this calls us to a sad meditation, to think from whence we have fallen, and so how great our fall is, to fall from such a blessed estate that must be great misery: Sathan hath spoiled us of our rich treasure, that glorious image of holiness, And hath drawn upon our souls the very visage of hell, the lineaments of his hellish countenance, but the most part of men ly stupid, insensible of any thing, as beasts that are felled with their fall, that can neither find pain nor rise, If we would but return and consider what are all these sad and wofull consequences of sin in the world, what a strange distemper it hath put in the Creation? What miseries that one fall hath brought on all mankind? I am sure by these bruises we might conjecture what a strange fall it hath been. Sin did interpose between God and us, and this darkned our souls, and killed them, the light of knowledge was put out, and the life of holiness extinguished, and now there remains nothing of all that stately building, but some ruines of common principles of reason and honesty engraven on all mens consciences, which may shew unto us what the building hath been, we have fallen from holiness, and from happiness, our souls are deformed and de-
faced, you see what a ill favoured thing it is to see a child wanting any members; O if sin were visible, how ugly would the shape of the soul be to us, since it hath lost the very proportion and visage of it, that is Gods image? Let us consider this Doctrine, that we may know from whence we have fallen, and into what a gulf of sin and misery we have fallen, that the new news of Jesus Christ a Mediator and Redeemer of fallen man, may be sweet unto us. Thus it pleased the Lord to let his image be marred and quite

quire spoiled in us, for he had this design to re-
and renew it better then of old, and for this
hath created Christ according to his image, he
stamped that image of holinesse upon his flesh,
a patern, and not only so, but a pledge also
storing such souls as flee unto him for refuge
that primitive glory and excellency: Know
that he hath made his Son like unto us, he
might again be made like unto him, he said, let
us be made man, in the counsel of Redemption
so it might again be said, let man be made like
us, in our image; It is a second Creation must
and, O that you would look upon your hearts
quire if it be framed in you, certainly you must
be created into that image if you belong to Christ
him be Praise and Glory.

Rom. 11. 36. *Of Him, and through him
Him are all things, &c.* Psal. 103.
His Kingdom is over all. Matth. 10.
*A sparrow shall not fall without your
thers will.*

THere is nothing more commonly com-
in words, then that the Provider
God reacheth to all the creatures and
actions; But I believe there is no po-
Religion so superficially and slightly consider
the most part of men: The most part ponder
of these divine truths, there is nothing above
senses which is the subject of their meditation
for the children of God, I fear many do give
truths of God too common and course entertain
in their minds, through a conceit of the com-
nesse of them. I know not what we are tak-

with in this age, with some particular truths more remote from the knowledge of others in former times, or some particular cases concerning our selves: you will find the most part of Christians stretch not their thoughts beyond their own conditions or interests, or some particular questions, about Faith and Repentance, &c. and in the mean time the most weighty points of Religion, which have been the subject of the mediation and admiration of Saints in all ages, are wholly laid aside, through a misapprehension of their commonnesse, as if a man would despise the Sun & the Air, and prepare some rare peece of stone or timber for them. Certainly as in the disposal of the world, the Lord hath in great wisdom and goodnesse made the most needfull and usefull things most common, these without which man cannot live, are alwayes obvious to us, so that if any thing be more rare, it is not necessary; So in this universe of Religion, the mercy and wisdom hath so framed all, that these points of truth and belief, which are most near the substance of Salvation, and necessary to it, and most to exercise us in true godlinesse, these are every where to be found, partly engraven on mens hearts, partly set down most clearly and often in Scripture, that a believing soul can look no where, but it must breath in that air of the Gospel, and look upon that common Son of Righteousnesse, God the Creator, and the healing Son Christ the Redeemer, shining every where in Scripture. The general providence of God, and the special administration of Christ the Saviour, these are common, and these are essential to our happinesse; therefore the meditation of Christians should run most upon them, and not alwayes about some particular questions or debates of the time. It is a strange thing how people would be more affected with a discourse on the affairs of the time, or on some inward thoughts of their own hearts, then if one should speak of Gods Universal Kingdom over all men and nations, that is accounted a general and ordinar discourse

course, even as if men would set at nought the light, because it shines to all, and every day would despise the water, because it may be every where; Let the Sun be removed for some and O what would the world account of it! all your curious divices or rare enjoyments. it which would increase to more true godline rightly believed, then many other things ye asfied withall. Its our general view of them but general. I spoke once upon this word, Ro 36. But only in reference to the end of man, is Gods glory; but the words do extend further and we must now consider what further they forth. The Apostle hath been speaking of the unsearchable wayes and judgements towards man the dispensation of grace and salvation, how and how absolute he is in that? And this he sheweth by the supream wisdom of God, *who devised him?* Why dost thou, O man, take upon thee to rect him now? For where was there any count when he alone contrived all the frame of this and then by sovereign highnesse and supremacie the creatures disposed of them? For he is deb none, therefore none can quarrel him for giving not giving, for who was it that gave him first which he should give a recompence? Was there could prevent him with a gift? Nay, none saith he, *For of him, and through him, and by him are all things:* And therefore he must prevent for from whence should that gift of the which could oblige him have its rise, it must be God if it be a creature, and therefore he is in common, he must give it ere we have it to give again.

The words are most comprehensive, they comprehend all things, and that is very large: They comprehend nothing without this compasse, and they comprehend all the dependence of things. Things depend upon that which made them, that which pre-

them, and that for which they are made. All things depend on him as their producing cause, that first gives them a being: *For of him are all things*, they also depend on him as their conserving cause, who continueth their being by that self same influence wherewith he gave it, for through him are all things: And then they depend on him as their final cause, for whose glory they are, and are continued; for, *For him are all things*. Thus you have the beginning, the continuance, and the end of the whole Creation: This word may lead us through all, from God as the beginning, the *Alpha* and original of their being: through God as the only supporter, confirmer, and upholder of their being, and unto God as the very end for which they have their being. Now to travel within this compasse, to walk continually within this circle, and to go alongs this blessed round, to begin with God and to go alongs all our way with him, till we arrive and end at God, and thus to do continually the journey of meditation, when it surveyes any of his works, this were indeed the very proper work, and the special happinesse man was created for; and I may say, a great part of that for which a Christian is created for again: there would be nothing more powerful to the conforming of a soul to God, and to his obedience and fear, then this, to have that perswasion firmly rooted in the heart, *that God are all things*, that what ever it be, good or ill that befalls us, or others, what ever we observe in the world, that is the subject of the thoughts and discourses of men, and turns mens eyes after him, that all that is of God; that is, it is in the world, its started out of nothing at his command, it is, because his power gave it a being, and in this consideration to overlook and in a manner forget all second causes, to have such affecting and up-taking thoughts of the first principle of all these motions, to regard the lower wheels that are next us, no more then the hand or the sword that a man strikes

us with; as if these second causes had no influence of their own, but were meerly acted and moved by this supreme power, as if God did nothing by them, but only at their presence. We would so labor to look on these things he doth by creatures, as if he did them alone without the creatures, as if he were this day creating a world: Certainly the solidity of Gods Providence will draw off the covering of the creature, and espie the secret Almighty power which acteth in every thing, to bring forth his pleasure concerning them: And then to come with that same seriousnesse of meditation to the same everlasting arm which made them, is undertaken to support them, that the most noble and excellent creatures are but streams, rayes, images and shadows of Gods Majesty, which as they have their beginning of derivation, so they have their continuance by the same continued influence; so that if he would remove himself between him and them, or withdraw his countenance, or stop his influence, the most sufficient of them all should evanish as the Sunbeams, dry up the streams of a fountain, and disappear as the light of the glasse, *Psal. 104. 29. 30.* O that place a pertinent object of a Christians meditation, how much of God is to be prest out of it by serious considering of it? *Thou hidest thy face and they are troubled, thou takes away thy breath and they die, thou sendest forth thy spirit and they are created.* It is even with every being and faculties of the creature, as with an image in the glasse, which when the face removed it is seen no more: The Lord as it were breathes in them a being, and when he takes in his breath they perish, and when he sends it out again they are renewed; We do not wonder at the standing of the world, but think if we had been witnesses of the making of it, we would have been filled with admiration; But certainly its only our stupidity that we do not behold that same wonder continued, for we see the upholding of this by his power, but a very

tinued and repeated Creation? Which influence were able to bring a world out of nothing, if this had not been before the vertue and power he imployes now in making them subsist, that same alone without any addition of power, would have in the beginning made all this to be of nothing, so that the continuance of the world is nothing else but an uninterrupted and constant flux and emanation of these things from God, as of light from the body of the Sun. And then to meditate how all these things are for him, & his glory, though we know no use nor end of them, yet that his Majesty hath appointed them to shew forth on way or other the glory of his name in them, and these things which to our first and foolish apprehensions seem most contrary to him, and as it were, to spread a cloud of darknesse over his glorious name, the sins and perverse doings of men and Angels, the many disorders and confusions in the world, which seem to reflect some way upon him, that yet he hath holy and glorious ends in them all, yea, that himself is the end of all: I say, to meditate on these things till our soul received the stamp of reverence and fear, and faith in God, this would certainly be the most becoming exercise of a Christian, to bring all things down from God, that we might return and ascend with all things again unto God.

This is the most suitable employment of a man as reasonable, much more as Christian, that very duty he was created for. *This people have I formed for my self, they shall shew forth my praise*, Isa. 43. 21. And this is the shewing forth of his praise, to follow forth the footsteps of God in the Word, and in the world, and to ponder these paths of divine power, and goodnesse, and wisdom, and to acknowledge him with our heart in all these. He made many creatures on which his glory and praise is shewed forth, and he made this creature man, to shew forth that praise, and that glory which is shewed forth in other creatures. Q but this is a divine office, it is strange how,

our hearts are carried forth towards base things, and busied in many vain, impertinent and base imaginations, and scarce ever minds this great one we were created for.

Certainly this is the employment we were created for, to deduce all things from God, till we can reduce all to him with glory, to bring all down to his everlasting counsels, untill we send all up to Eternal glory, together with the sacrifice of hearts; to behold all things to be of him, that his eternal counsel and decree, to have their rise from the bosome of that, and then through him, to come out of the bosome of his decree and purpose by his power, *quasi obstetricante Potentia*, and then return with all the praise and glory to his ever glorious Name, for whom are all things. There is but they will allow God some government in the world, some would have him as a King, commanding and doing all by deputies and substitutes. Some would have his influence general, like the sun upon sublunarie things, but how shallow are mens thoughts in regard of that which is: God prepared indeed his Throne in Heaven, that is that his glory doth manifest it self in some fit and majestick manner above, but the whole rest of Scripture shews that he is not shut up in heaven, that he immediatly cares for, governs, and disposes of all things in the world, for his Kingdom is over all. It is the weaknesse of Kings, not their glory, they have need of deputies, it is his glory, not his need, to look to the meanest of his creatures, a poor resemblance and empty shadow that we have of him, *He rules in the Kingdoms of men*, to him belongs the dominion and the glory, he serves the name of a King, whose beck Heaven and Earth obeys. Can a King command that the sun rise not, can a Parliament act and ordain that the sun rise not, or will these obey them? Yet at his silence and command the Sun is dark, the Sea stands

the mountains tremble, at thy rebuke the sea fled. Alas what do we mean that we look upon creatures, and acts our selves, as if we were independent in our being and moving? How many things fall out and you call them casuall, and attributes them to fortune? How many things do the world gaze upon, think upon, and discourse upon, and yet not one thought, one word of God all the time? What more contingent then the falling of a sparrow on the ground? And yet even that is not unexpected to him, but it flows from his will and counsel: What lesse taken notice of or known then the hairs of your head, yet these are particularly numbered by him, and so no power in the world can add to them, or diminish from them, without his counsel? O what would the belief of this do to raise our hearts to suitable thoughts of God above the creatures; to increase the fear, faith, and love of God, and to abate from our fear of men, and our vain and unprofitable cares, and perplexities? How would you look upon the affairs of men, the counsels, contrivances, enterpours, and successes of men, when they are turning things upside down, and plotting the ruine of his people, and establishing themselves alone in the earth? What would you think of all these revolutions at this time? Many souls are astonished at them, and stand gazing at what is done and to be done, and this is the very language of your spirits and wayes, *The Lord hath forsaken the earth*, the Lord seeth not, this is the language of our Parliament and people, they do imagine that they are doing their own businesse, and being all sure for themselves: But, O what would a soul think that could escape above them all, and rise up to the first wheel of present motions? A soul that did stand upon the exalted tower of the word of God, and looked off it by the prospect of truth, would presently discover the circle in which all these wanderings and changes are confined, and see men, States, Armies, Nations, and all of them doing

doing nothing but turning about in a round (as a horse in a miln) from Gods eternal purpose, by almighty power, to his unspeakable glory: might behold all these extravagant motions of creatures, inclosed within those limits, that must begin here, and end here, though themselves so beastly, that they neither know of *whom*, nor *whom* their counsels and actions are: certainly *S* cannot break without this compasse to serve his humour, principalities and powers cannot do it: they will not glorifie him, he shall glorifie him by them, and upon them.

Gen. 2. 17. *In that day thou eats, thou shalt die.*

Gen. 1. 26. *Let us make man according to our Image.*

THe state wherein man was created at you heard was exceeding good, all that was very good, and he best of all, the choicest eternal and visible peece of Gods worship made according to the most excellent pattern of *our image*, though it be a double misery to be unhappy, yet seeing the knowledge of our misery by the grace of God made the entry to a new holinesse, it is most necessary to take a view of man once was, that we may be more sensible what he now is. You may take up this image likeness in three branches. First, There was a sweet conformity of the soul in its understanding, will, and affections unto Gods holinesse and love. A beautifull light in the mind, derived from that same light, by which *Adam* did exactly know

divine and natural things: What a great difference doth yet appear between a learned man and an ignorant rude person, though it be but in relation to natural things, the one is but like a beast in comparison of the other? O how much more was there between *Adams* knowledge, and that of the most learned? The highest advancement of *Arte* and industry in this, reacheth no further then to a learned ignorance of the mysteries in the works of God, and yet there is a wonderfull satisfaction to the mind in it. But how much sweet complacency hath *Adam* had, whose heart was enlarged as to know both things higher and lower, their natures, properties and virtues, and several operations? No doubt could trouble him, no difficulty vex him, no controversie or question perplex him, but above all the knowledge of that glorious and eternal being, that gave him a being, and infused such a spirit into him, the beholding of such infinite treasures of wisdom and goodnesse, and power in him, what an amiable and refreshful sight would it be, when there was no cloud of sin or ignorance, to interpose and eclipse the full enjoyment of that increased light? When the aspect of the Sun makes the Moon so glorious and beautiful, what may you conceive of *Adams* soul framed with capacity to receive light immediately from Gods countenance? How fair and beautifull would that soul be untill the dark cloud of sin did interpose it self? Then consider what a beautifull rectitude and uprightness, what a comely order and subordination would ensue upon this light, and make his will and affections wonderfull good? *Eccles. 7. 29. God made man upright.* There was no throw nor crack at all, all the powers of the soul bending upright towards that fountain of all goodnesse, now the soul is crooked and bends downward towards those base earthly things, that is the abasement of the soul; when it looked upright towards God, had no appetite, no delight but in him and his fulnesse, and had the moon

moon or changeable world under his feet ; there
 a beauty of holinesse and righteousness, which
 the colours, that God did perfect and adorne the
 neaments of the image of God, which knowledge
 draw in the soul ; *He was a burning and shining*
 may be truly said of *Adam* who had as much
 light, as much delight in God as knowledge of
 this was the right constitution and disposition
 man, his head lifted up in holinesse and love to
 God, his arms stretched out in righteousness
 equity towards man, and all the affections of
 man under their command, they could not
 this sea with any tempest, because they were
 such a powerfull commander, who kept them
 such a w and obedience, as the Centurion his serve
 saying to one go, and he goeth, and to another
 and it cometh, sending out love one way, holy
 red another way. These were as wings to the
 to flee upon, as wheels to the chariot to run
 though now it be turned just contrary, that the
 riot draws the Coach-man, because the motion
 downward. There could be no motion in an up
 mans soul, till the holy and righteous will give
 a sentence upon it, that was the *Primum mobile*
 which turned about it self, by such an *intellig*
 as the understanding. And so it was in Christ, a
 on could not move him, but he did move his ow
 fections, *He troubled himself*. In us the servants
 on horses, and the Prince walks on foot, and
 a distempered society, the Laws and Ordinances
 ceedeth by an unnatural way from the violence of
 ruly subjects usurping over their Masters. Holy
 righteous man could both raise up his affections,
 compose them again, they were under (such
 and discipline ; He could have said hitherto, a
 further, in which there was no resemblance
 God, ruling the raging and unruly sea ; But now
 once they get entry into our city, they are
 powerfull then the Governour, and will not

laws from him, but give rather; when we have given way to our passions, they do next what they please, not what we permit.

Next his excellency consisted in such an immunity and freedom from all fear of misery and danger, from all touch of sorrow or pain, and did enjoy such an holy Complacency and delight in his own estate, as made him compleatly happy. In this he was like God. That is his blessednesse that he is absolutely well pleased in himself, that he is without the reach of fear and danger, that none can impare it, none can match it, *I am God and none else*, that is sufficiency of delight to know himself, and his own sufficiency; Indeed man was made changeable, mutably good that in this he might know God was above him, and so might have ground of watchfulnesse and dependence upon him, for continuance of his happiness who made him happy: But being made so upright, no disquieting fear, nor perplexing care could trouble him. Then lastly, if you adde unto this holy satisfaction with his own state and freedom, the dominion and sovereignty he had over the creatures, as a consequent flowing from that image, you may imagine what a happy creature he was? Whatsoever contentment or satisfaction the creatures could afford, all of them willingly and pleasantly would concur to bestow it upon man, without his care or toil, as if they had accounted it their happiness to serve him, what more excellent then this order? Man counting it his happiness and delight to serve God, and creatures esteeming it their happiness to serve man, all things running towards him with all their goodnesse, as to a common center; And he returning all to God from whence they did immediately flow: Thus besides the fulnesse and riches of Gods goodnesse immediatly conferred upon man, he was enriched with all the store and goodnesse that the earth was full of.

God having made man thus, and furnished him after
this

this manner, he gave him a Law, and then he made a Covenant with him, there was a Law first imposed upon Adam, and then a Law prescribed unto him: there was a Law written in his heart, the remembrance of which *Paul* saith makes the Gentiles inexcusable; but it was perfectly drawn in him, all the principles and notions of good and evil, were exactly in it: he had a natural discerning of them, a natural inclination to all good, and averſation from all evil: As there is a kind of Law imposed by nature upon other creatures, which they constantly observe and do not ſwerve from, even his decree and commandment, to the obedience of which they are ſubjected and framed, the ſea hath a Law and conſtancy to flow and ebbe, and it is that command that keeps his proud waves on the ſand, when they threaten to overflow mountains; the beaſts obey a Law in their natures of eating and drinking, of ſleeping and their ſenſes, and every one hath its ſeveral inſtinct and propenſion to ſeveral operations; So God gave a more noble inſtinct unto man, ſuitable to his noble ſoul, an inſtinct and impuſe to pleaſe God by ſuch duties of holineſſe and righteouſneſſe, and to live with ſuch wayes of integrity and godlineſſe, and an innate antipathie againſt ſuch wayes that were diſpleaſing to him or diſhonourable to his nature: There is a kind of comlineſſe and ſweet ſymony and proportion, between ſuch works as the will of God and man, the uſe of all for his glory, to whom all things are, and mans reaſonable nature ſuch a thing doth ſuit and become it, againſt ſuch things, as the hatred of God and men, negligence and forgetfulneſſe of him; drunkenneſſe and aban- donment of that kind do diſagree, and are undecent. O how happy was *Adam* when holineſſe and righteouſneſſe were not written on tables of ſtone, but in his heart, and when there was no need of external perſwaſion, but there was an inward impuſe drawing him ſtrongly, and laying a kind of ſweet ne-

upon him, to that which was both his duty to God and men, and his own dignity and priviledge? This was no question the very beauty of his soul, to be not only under a Law proper and peculiar to himself, but to be inwardly framed and moulded to it, to be a living law unto himself.

But besides this inward imprinted Law of holinesse and righteousness, which did without more rules direct him and determine to that which is in it self good, it pleased the Lord to prescribe and impose a positive Law unto him, to command him abstinence from a thing neither good nor evil, but indifferent, and such a thing as of it self he might have done, as well as made use of any other creature, there was no difference between the fruit was discharged him, and the fruit of the rest of the garden, there was nothing in it did require abstinence, and nothing to him either. Yet for most wise and holy ends the Lord enjoyns him to abstain from that fruit, and as an act of restraint upon him to abridge his liberty in that which might prove his obedience, and not hinder his happinesse or diminish it; Because he furnished him abundantly beside. You may perceive two reasons of it, one is, that the sovereign power and dominion of God over all men may be more eminently held forth, and that visibly in such a symbol and figure. He who put man in such a well furnished house, and placed in such a plentiful and fruitfull garden, reserves one tree, *Thou shalt not eat thereof*, to let Adam see and know that he is the sovereign power of all things, and that his dominion over the creatures, and their service unto him, was not so much for any natural prerogative of man above them, but out of divine bountie and indulgence, because he had chosen a creature to himself, to beautifie and make happy. This was a standing visible testimony to every man continually to remembrance of his sovereignty, that being thus far exalted above other creatures, he might know himself to be under his

Creator, and that he was infinitely above him; he might remember his own homage and subjection to God, when ever he looked upon his dominion over the creatures. And truly in other natures which an inward principle and instinct drive to, the suitableness and conveniency or beauty of a thing, doth often preponderate, and might make men to observe them, without so much regard to the will and pleasure of the most high; But in the Lord would have no other reason of obedience appear, but his own absolute will and pleasure; teach all men to consider in their actions, rather the will of the commander, than the goodness of the thing commanded. And then for this it was enjoined to make a more exact trial, and take a more ample proof of *Adams* obedience: tentimes we do things commanded of God, but for what ground or motive? Because our own interest lyes in them, because there is an inward weight or *pondus* of affection pressing us to them. The Lord commands the mutual duties between Parents and Children, between Man and Wife, between friends; duties of self preservation and defence, and such like; and many are very exact and diligent in performing these; But from what principle its easie to discern, not because they are commanded of God, not so much as a thought of that, for the most part, but because of an inward and natural inclination of affection towards our selves and our relations, which is an instinct and impulse driving us to these duties: truly we may say it is the goodness and bounty of the Lord, that hath conjoyned in most part of the commanded duties our own interest and advantage with his own inclination and propension with his authority; or else the toil and pain of them would overcome the weight of his Authority. Now then in those duties as are already imprinted on mans heart, consonant to his own reason, there cannot be a true proof of obedience to Gods will, the pure and

of obedience doth not so clearly shine forth in
 observation of these, it is no great tryal of the
 creatures subjection of its will, to his supream will
 when there are so many reasons besides his wil which
 incline mans will unto it; But here in a matter
 it self pleasant to the senses, unto which he had
 natural inclination, the Lord interposes himself by
 command of restraint, to take full probation whe-
 ther man would submit to his good pleasure meerly
 it self, or whether he would obey meerly because
 of commands: and indeed in such like duties as
 have no commendation but from the will and autho-
 rity of the Law-giver, it will appear whether mans
 obedience be pure and simple obedience, and whether
 it be love obedience for it self alone, or for other
 reasons, therefore the Lord saith, obedience is better
 than sacrifice, and disobedience is rebellion, suppose
 in such things as can neither hurt us nor help us, God
 lay a restraint upon us, though obedience may be of
 less worth then in other more substantial things, yet
 obedience in such easie matters is most hainous, be-
 cause it proclaims openly rebellion against God; if it
 be light and easie, it is more easily obeyed, and the
 more fin and wickednesse in disobeying; and there-
 fore is *Adams* sin called disobedience in a signal man-
 ner, *Rom. 5.* because by refusing such a small point
 of homage and subjection, he did cast off Gods power
 and authority over him, and would not acknowledge
 him for his superiour. This should teach us who
 believe the repairing of that Image by Jesus Christ,
 to study such a respect and reverence to Gods holy
 will, as to do all things without more asking why
 is so? If we once know what it is, there is no
 more question to be asked. Of creatures we must
 enquire a *quare*, after a *quid*, a *why*, after we know
 what their will is; But Christians should have their
 wills so subdued unto Gods, that though no profite
 or advantage were to redound by obedience, though
 were in things repugnant and crosse to our inclina-

tion and humor, yet we should serve and obey him as a testimony of our homage and subjection to him; and till we learn this, and be more abstracted from our own interests in the wayes of obedience, even from the interests of peace, and comfort, and liberty, we do not obey him, because he commands but for our own sakes. It is the practice of *Antinomians*, and contrary to true Godlinesse, to look on the Law of God as the creatures bondage, as we do in our walking: a Christian in whom the Image of God is renewed according to righteousness and holinesse, should esteem subjection and conformity to a Law, and to the will of God his only liberty, yea the very beauty of the soul, and as is a soul advanced in conformity to God, till this be delight, not a burden or task.

Gal. 3. 12. The Law is not of Faith, but the man that doth them shall live therein.

Gen. 2. 17. What day thou eats thereof thou shalt die.

THe Lord made all things for himself, to set forth the Glory of his Name, and in a more eminent and special manner, more eminent manifestations of himself, therefore all his dealings towards men, whether righteous or sinfull, do declare the glory of God. Particularly in reference to the present purpose, resolved to manifest two shining properties, his Sovereignty and Goodnesse; his Sovereignty is shewed in giving out a Law and Command to the creature, and his Goodnesse is manifested in making a Covenant with his creatures, as here you see the terms of the Covenant, a duty required, and a promise made.

and in case of failing, a threatening conformed to the promise. He might have required obedience simply as the Lord and Sovereign owner of the being and operations of the creatures, and that was enough of obligation to bind all flesh, that the Creator is Law-giver, that he who gives a being, doth set bounds and limits to the exercise and use of that being; But it pleased the Lord in his infinite goodnesse and love, to add a promise and threatening to that Law and Command, and so turns it to the nature of a voluntary Covenant and agreement, whereby he doth mitigate and sweeten his Authority and Power, and condescended so low to man as to take on himself a greater obligation then he puts upon man, *Do this and thou shalt live.* He might have out of his absolute power have required at the creatures hand any terms he pleased, even the hardest could be imagined, and yet no injustice in him, he might have put Laws on men to restrain all their natural liberty, and in every thing to proclaim nothing but his own supremacy, but O what goodnesse and condescension is even in the very matter of the Law, and then in the manner of prescribing it with a promise; In the matter so just and equitable to convince all mens consciences, yea, even ingraven on their hearts, that he layes not many burdens on, but what mens consciences must lay on them themselves, that there is nothing in it all when summed up harder then this, love God most of all, and thy neighbour as thy self, which all men must proclaim to be due, though it had not been required; And but one precept added by his meer will, which yet was so easie a thing, as it was a wonder the Lord of all put no other condition on the creature: And then for the manner, that it is propounded in Covenant-wise, with a promise, (not to expect the creatures consent, for it did not depend on his acceptation, he being bound to accept any terms his Lord propounded) but because the matter and all was so equitable, and the condition

so ample, that if it had been propounded to any rational man he would have consented with an aration at Gods goodnesse: Indeed if we speak truly, there cannot be a proper Covenant between God and man, there is such an infinite distance between such unequal parties, our obedience and performance being absolutely in his power, we cannot promise as our own, and it being but our duty; we cannot crave or expect a reward in justice, neither can we owe any thing to the creature; yet it pleased Majesty to propound it in these terms, and to stoop so low unto mens capacities, as if it were, come to the Throne of his Sovereignty, both to require such duties of men, and to promise unto them a free reward, and the reasons of this may be taken upon Gods part, and upon ours, in such dealing he consulted his own Glory, and mans good: his own Glory, I say, is manifested in it, and chiefly the Glory of his goodnesse and love, that the most High comes down so low as to article with his own foot-stool, that he changeth his absolute right into a moderat and temperat Government, and tempereth his Lordly and truly Monarchial power, by such a mixture of gentlenesse and goodnesse, in requiring nothing but what man behoved to call reasonable due; and in promising so much as no creature could challenge any title of it. When the Law was promulgate, *Do this, Eat not of this Tree, Adams* conscience behoved to say, amen Lord, all is due to the reason in the world for it, but when the promise is added, and the Trumpet sounds longer, *ye shall live*, O more then reason, more then is must his conscience say, it was reason that the High Lord should use his foot-stool as his footstool, and set his servant in the place of a servant, and keep distance from him, but how strange is it that he humbleth himself to make friendship with us, and assume him in a kind of familiarity and equality. And this Christ is not forgetful of, when here

men, he puts them in all their former dignities, *I call you not servants, but friends*: Next his Wisdom doth appear in this, that when he had made a reasonable creature, he ~~taught~~ ^{taught} him of dealing suitable to his nature, to bring him to willing and free obedience by the perswasion of ~~reward~~ ^{reward}, and the terrour of such a punishment. He most wisely did inclose the will of man, as it were, on both sides with hedges of punishment and reward, which might have been a sufficient defence or guard against all the irruptions of contrary perswasions, that man might continue in obedience, and that when he went to the right hand or left, he might be kept in by the hope of such an ample promise, and the fear of such a dreadful threatening. But then the righteousness of God doth appear in this, for there is nothing doth more illustrate the justice of the Judge, then when the Malefactor hath before consented to such a punishment in case of transgression; when the Law is confirmed by the consent and approbation of man, now he hath man subscribing already to his judgement, and so all the world must stop their mouth and become guilty in case of transgression of such a righteous command after such warning.

But in the next place, its no lesse for mans good, what a honour and dignity was put upon man when he was taken into friendship with God? To be in Covenant of friendship with a King; O what a dignity is it accounted? And some do account it a great priviledge to be in company, and converse with some eminent and great Person: But may not man say with the Psalmist, *Psal. 8. Lord, what is man that thou art so mindful of him, or the Son of man that thou visitest him? and makes a Covenant of friendship and life with him?* Again, what way more fit and suitable to stir up and constrain Adam unto a willing and constant obedience? When he had the encouragement of such a gracious reward, and the determent of such a fearful punishment, between these two banks might the silver streams

streams of obedience have run for ever without breaking over. He was bound to all, though nothing had been promised, but then to have such a hope, whose spirit might it adde to him? The Lord had been upon mans obedience, and to continue him in his happy estate, or to deliver him of it, or to annihilate him, there was no obligation lying on him; but what confirmation might man have by looking upon the certain recompence of reward? When God brings himself freely under an Obligation of a Promise, and so ascertains it to his soul which he could never have dreamed of, and gives him liberty to challenge him upon his faithfulness to perform it. And then lastly, there was no way so fit to commend God, and sweeten him unto his soul as this. Adam knew that his goodnesse could not extend to God, that his righteousness could not help him, nor his wickednesse hurt him, and so could expect nothing from his exact obedience, but now when Gods goodnesse doth so overflow unto the Creature, and the Lord takes pleasure to communicate himself to make others happy, though he had need of none; O how must it ingage the heart of man to a delightful remembrance. and converse with that God? As his authority would imprint reverence, so his goodnesse thus manifested would ingrave confidence, and thus the life of man was not only a life of obedience, but a life of pleasure and delight, not only a holy but a happy life, yea, happy in holinesse.

Now as it was *Pauls* great businessse in preaching to rid marches between the Covenant of Grace, and the Covenant of Works, to take men off that broken ship to this sure plank of grace that is offered by Jesus Christ to drowning souls; So it would be our great work to shew unto you the nature of this Covenant, and the terms thereof, that you might henceforth find and know that salvation to be impossible by the Law, which so many seek in vain. We have no earand to speak of the first Adam,

the better to lead you to the second, our life was once in the first, but he lost himself and us both, but the second by losing himself saves both. We have nothing ado to speak of the first Covenant, but that we may lead you or pursue you rather to the second, established upon better terms and better promises.

The terms of this Covenant are, *Do this and live*, perfect obedience, without one jot of failing or falling, an intire and universal accomplishment of the whole will of God, that is the duty required of man, there is no latitude left in the bargain to admit endeavours, instead of performance, or desire instead of duty, there is no place for Repentance here, if a man fall in one point, he falls from the whole promise, by the tenor of this bargain there is no hope of recovery. If you would have the duty in a word, its a love of God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as our self, and that testified and verified in all duties and offices of obedience to God, and love to men, without the least mixture of sin and infirmity. Now the promise on Gods part is indeed larger then that duty, not only because undeserved, but even in the matter of it, its so abundant, life, eternal life, continuance in a happy estate. There is a threatening added, *In what day thou eats thou shalt die*, that is, thou shalt become a mortal and miserable creature, subject to misery here, and hereafter, which is more pressingly set down in that word, *Cursed is he that abides not in all things written in the Law to do them*. It is very peremptor, that men dream not of escaping wrath, when they break but in one, suppose they did abide in all the rest, Cursed is every man from the highest to the lowest, the Lord Almighty is engaged against him, his countenance, his power is against him to destroy him and make him miserable; Who ever doth fail but in one jot of the commands, he shall not only fall from that blessed condition freely promised, but lose all that he already possessed

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possessed, fall from that image of God, dominion
over the creatures, and incur in stead of that pos-
sessed and expected happinesse, misery here on soul
and body, in pains, sicknesses, troubles, griefs, &c.
And eternal misery on both without measure hereaf-
ter: *Eternall destruction from the presence of the Lord
and the glory of his power.*

Now, *this Law is not of Faith*, saith the Apostle.
This opens up the nature of the bargain, and the op-
position between the present Covenant and that
which is made with lost sinners in a Mediator. This
Covenant is called of works, *Do this and live*, to
him that worketh is the Promise made, though free-
ly too. It is grace that once a reward should be pro-
mised to obedience, but having once resolved to give
it, herein justice appears in an equal and uniform
distribution of the reward, according to works; So
that where there is an equality of works, there shall
be an equality of reward, and no difference put be-
tween persons equal: which is the very freedom of
the Covenant of Grace, that it passeth over all former
considerations, and deals equally in mercy with all
equal sinners, and unequally it may be with those
that are equal in nature.

You may ask, was not *Adam* to believe in God, and
did not the Law require faith? I answer, Christ dis-
tinguisheth a twofold faith, *You believe in God, be-
lieve also in me.* No question he was called to be-
lieve in God the Creator of the world, and that in a
three-fold consideration.

First, to depend on God the self-being and foun-
tain-good, his own goodnesse was but a flux and
emanation from that Sun of Righteousnesse, and
was to be perpetuated by constant abiding in his sight,
the interposition of mans self between him and God
did soon bring on this eternal night of darkness.
Nature might have taught him to live in him
whom he had life and being and motion, and to for-
get and look over his own perfections as evanishing
shadows.

shadows; But this quickly extinguished his life, when he began to live in himself.

Next he was obliged to believe in Gods Word, both threatning and promise, and to have these constantly in his view, and certainly if he had kept in his serious consideration the inestimable blessing of life promised, and the fearfull curse of death threatned, if he had not been induced first to doubt, and then to deny the truth and reality of these, he had not attempted such a desperate rebellion against the Lord.

Then thirdly he was to believe and perswade himself of the Lords fatherly love, and that the Lord was well pleased with his obedience, and this faith would certainly beget much peace and quiernesse in his mind, and also constrain him to love him, and live to him who loved him, and gave him life and happinesse out of love; yet this holds true that the Apostle saith, *The Law is not of Faith*, to wit, in a Mediator and Redeemer, it was a bond of immediate friendship, there needed none to mediate between God and man, there needed no reconciler where there was no odds nor distance: But the Gospel is of Faith in a Mediator, its the soul plighting its hope upon Jesus Christ in its desperate necessity, and so supposeth man sinfull and miserable in himself, and in his own sense too, and so putting over his weight and burden upon one whom God hath made mighty to save: The Law is not of Faith, but of perfect works, a watch-word brought in of purpose to bring men off their hankering after a broken and desperate Covenant; It admits no repentance, it speaks of no pardon, it declares no Cautioner or Redeemer, there is nothing to be expected according to the tenor of that Covenant, but wrath from Heaven, either personal obedience in all, or personal punishment for ever, that is the very terms of it, and it knows no other thing. Either bring compleat righteousness and holinesse to the promise of life, or expect nothing but death.

This

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This may be a sad Meditation to us to stand
look back to our former estate, and compare it
that into which we are fallen, that image we
of is defaced and blotted out, which was the glory
the Creation, and now there is nothing so monstrous
so deformed in the world as man, the corruption
the best thing is alwayes worst, the ruines of
most noble creature, are most ruinous, the spot
the soul most abominable, we are nothing but a mass
of darknesse, ignorance, error, inordinate lust,
thing but confusion, disorder, and distempers in
soul, and in the conversation of men, and in
that blessed bond of friendship with God broken,
cord and enmity entered upon our side, and separated
us from God, and so we can expect nothing from
that first Covenant, but the curse and wrath threat-
ned: By one mans disobedience sin entered upon
and death by sin, because in that agreement Adam
a common person representing us, and thus all
once subject to Gods judgement, and come short
the glory of God, fallen from life into a state
death, and for any thing could be expected, impos-
sibly. But it hath pleased the Lord in his infinite
mercy, to make a better Covenant in Christ his
that what was impossible to the Law, by reason
our weaknesse and wickednesse, his son sent in
flesh condemned for sin might accomplish, Rom. 8.
There is some comfort yet after this, that Cove-
was not last, and that sentence was not irrevocable
makes a new transaction, layes the iniquity of
elect upon Christ, and puts the curse upon his
sins which was due to them, justice cannot
the abrogation of the Law, but mercy pleads
temperament of it, and thus the Lord disposes
with personall satisfaction, which in rigour he
have craved, and finds out a ransome, admits
thers satisfaction in their name, and in the
that Cautioner and Redeemer is salvation pro-
upon better terms; *Believe and thou shalt be saved.*

Wherein true Religion consists. 241

Rom. 10. Thou lost and undone sinner whoever thou art, that finds thy self guilty before God, and that thou cannot stand in judgement by the former Covenant, thou who hast no personall righteousnesse and trusts in none, come here, imbrace the righteousness of thy Cautioner, receive him, and rest on him, and thou shalt be saved.

Eccles. 7. 29. God made man upright, but he sought out many inventions.

THe one half of true Religion consists in the knowledge of our self, the other half in the knowledge of God, and what ever besides this men study to know and apply their hearts unto, its vain and impertinent, and like meddling in other mens matters, neglecting our own, if we do not give ourselves to the search of these: All of us must needs grant this in the general that it is an idle and unprofitable wandering abroad to be carried forth to the knowledge and use of other things, and in the mean time to be strangers to our selves with whom we should be most acquainted. If any man was diligent and earnest in the enquiry and use of the things of the world, Solomon was, he applied his heart to seek out wisdom, and what satisfaction was in the knowledge of all things natural, and in this he attained a great degree beyond all other men, yet he pronounceth of it all after experience and trial, *That this also was vanity and vexation of spirit*, not only empty and unprofitable, and not conducing to that true blessednesse he sought after, but hurtfull and destructive, nothing but grief and sorrow in it. After he had proved all, with a resolution to be wise, yet it was far from him, *I said, I*
Y *wil*

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will be wise, but it was far from me, vers. 29
therefore after long wandering abroad, he returned
at length home to himself, to know the condition
mankind, *Lo, this only have I found, &c., vers. 30*
When I have searched all other things, and found
my things by search, (yet saith he) what do
all concern me, when I am ignorant of my self
is one thing concerns me more then all, to know
original of man, what he once was made, and
~~know~~ how far he is departed from his Original,
only I have found profitable to men, and as the
and preparation to that blessednesse I inquire for
have the true discovery of our misery.

There are two things then concerning man
you have to search and to know, and that not
trifling or curious manner, as if you had no
end in it, but to know it, as men do in other things
but in a serious and earnest way, as in a matter
much concernment to our Eternal wel-being
things that relate particularly to our selves, we
bourn to know them for some advantage, besides
knowing of them, even though they be but
and lower things; How much more should we
pose this unto our selves in the search and exami-
on of our own estate, not meerly to know such a thing
but to know it that we may be stirred up and
vocked in the sense of it, to look after the reason
that God holds forth. There are two things
you have to know, what man once was made,
how he is now unmade, how happy once, and
miserable now? And answerable to these two
the Branches of the Text, *God made man upright*
that he was once, and they have sought out many
ventions, not being contented with that blessed
they were created into, by catching at a higher
of wisdom, have fallen down into a gulf of misery
as the man that gazed on the stars above him
did not take notice of the pit under his feet till he
into it, and thus man is now. So you have a
acco

What we are to know concerning our selves. 243

Account of the two estates of men, of the estate of
grace and righteousness without sin, and the estate
of sin and misery without grace: you have the true
story of man from the Creation unto his present con-
dition: But all the matter is, to have the lively sense
of this upon our hearts, I had rather that we went
about bewailing our losse, and lamenting our misery,
and longing for the recovery of that blessednesse, then
that we went out with the exact memory of all that
is spoken, and could repeat it again.

God made man upright: At his first moulding the
Lord shewed excellent arte and wisdom and goodness
too; man did come forth from under his hand in the
first edition very glorious, to shew what he could
do, upright, that is, all right and very exactly con-
formed to the noble and high pattern, endowed with
divine wisdom, such as might direct him to true hap-
pinesse, and furnished with a divine willingnesse to
follow that direction, the command was not above
his head as a rod, but within his heart as a natural
instinct, all that was within him was comely and
beautiful, for that glorious light that shined upon
him, having life and love with it, produced a sweet
harmony in the soul, he knew his duty, and loved
it, and was able to perform it. O! how much is in
this one word? *Upright*, not only sincerity and in-
tegrity in the soul, but perfection of all the degrees
and parts, no part of holinesse wanting, and no mea-
sure of these parts, no mixture of darknesse or ig-
norance, no mixture of indisposition or unwilling-
nesse, godlinesse was sweet and not laborious, the
love of God possessing the heart, did conform all
within and without to the will of God; and, O
how beautifull was that conformity, and that love
of God the fountain-being, did send forth as a stream
love and good-will to all things, as they did partake
of Gods Image, and so holinesse towards God did be-
get righteousness towards men, and made men to
partake of one anothers happinesse.

This is a survey of him in his integrity made him, but there follows a sad *but*, a sad full exception : *But they have sought out many inventions.* We cannot look upon that glorious whereunto man was made, but straight way we turn our eyes upon that misery into which he plunged himself, and be the more affected with that it was once otherwise. It is misery in a degree to have been once happy, this most agreages our misery, and may increase the sense of it, that such man once was, and such we might have been, if we had not destroyed our selves. Who look upon these ruines and refrain mourning, I said, that these who saw the glory of the first Temple wept when they beheld the second, because it was not answerable to it in magnificence and glory; I say, it might occasion much sadnesse and grief to the children of God, in whom that Image of God part repaired, and that by a second Creation, to see how much more happy and blessed man once was who had grace and holinesse without sin. But mainly it should and must be at first before this can be restored, the bitter lamentation of a soul torn upon it self wholly ruinous and defaced, in the view of that glorious stately fabrick which once was made, how lamentable a sight is it to behold the first Temple demolished, or the first creation defaced, and the second not yet begun in many souls, the foundation yet not laid. It was a sad and doleful invention which Satan inspired at first into mans heart, to be about to find out another happinesse, to seek to be wise as God, an invention that did proceed from hell, how to know evil experimentally, practically by doing it; that invention hath invented and found out all the sin and misery under which this world groaneth. It is a poor invention to do misery and torment to the creature, this was the height of folly and madnesse, for a happy creature to invent how to make it self miserable, and all other

Indeed he intended another thing, to be more happy, but pride and ambition got a deserved fall, the result of all is, sin and misery.

And now from this first devillish invention the heart of man is possessed with a multitude of vain imaginations. Man is now become vain in his imaginations, and his foolish heart is darkened, that divine wisdom he was endowed withall is eclipsed, for he was a ray of Gods countenance, and now he is left wholly in the dark, without a guide, without a director or leader, he is turned out of the path of holinesse, and so of happinesse; a night of grosse darkness and blindness is come on, and the way is full of pits and snares, and the end of it is at best, eternal misery, and there is no lamp, no light to shine forth, to shew him either the misery that he is posting unto, or the happinesse he is fleeing from: there is nothing within him sufficient to direct his way to blessednesse, and nothing willing nor able to follow such a direction. And thus man is left to the invention and counsel of his own desperately wicked and deceitfull heart, and that is above all plagues to be given up to a reprobate mind: He is now left to such a tutor and guider, and it is full of inventions indeed, but they are all in vain, that is all of them insufficient for this great purpose, all of them cannot make one hair that is black, white, much lesse redeem the soul, but besides, they are destructive, they pretend to deliver, but they destroy, a desperate wicked heart imagineth evil continually, evil against God, and evil to our own souls, and a deceitfull heart smooths over the evil, and presents it under another notion, and so under pretence of a friend, its the greatest enemy a man hath, a bosome enemy. All mens inventions, thoughts, cogitations, projects and endeavours, what do they tend to, but to the satisfaction of their lusts, either the lusts of the mind, as ambition, pride, avarice, passion, revenge, and such like, or the lusts of the body, as pleasure to the

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ears, and to the eyes, and to the flesh. Man
made with an upright soul, with a dominion
that brutish part, more like Angels, but now all
invention runs upon that base and beastly part
to adorn it, how to beautifie it, how to satisfie
and for this the soul must be a drudge and slave:
if men rise up to any thoughts of a higher life,
what is it for, but to magnifie and exalt the flesh
seek an excellency within, which is lost, and so to
satisfie the pride and self-love of the heart. If
man comes this length, as to apprehend some misery
yet how vain are his inventions about the remedy
it, not knowing how desperate the disease is, they
seek help in themselves, and think by industry, art
care, and arte, to raise themselves up in some measure
and please God by some expiations or sacrifices
their own works, now this tends to no other pur-
pose, but to satisfie the lust of mans pride, and
it increaseth that which was mens first maladie, and
keeps them from the true Physician. In a word, all
mans inventions are to hasten misery on him, or to
blind-fold himself till it come on, all his inventions
cannot reach a delivery from this misery. Let
therefore consider this which Solomon hath found out
and if we carefully consider it, and accurately pos-
der it in relation to our own souls, then have we
so found it with him. Consider, I say, what man
once was, and what you are now, and bevail your mis-
ery and the fountain of it, our departure from the
fountain of life and blessednesse: know what you
are, not only weak, but wicked, whose arte and
power lies only in wickednesse, skilfull and able only
to make your selves miserable, and let this confide-
ration make you cast away all your confidence in
your selves, and carry you forth to a Redeemer,
who hath found a ransome, who hath found out an
excellent invention to cure all our distempers and
desperate diseases, The counsel of the holy Trinity
that met about (if I may speak so) our creation in
holi-

holinesse and righteousnesse after his own Image, that same hath consulted about the rest of it, and hath found out this course, that one of them shall be made after mans image, and for this purpose that he may restore again Gods Image unto us: O blesse this deep invention and happy contrivance of Heaven, that could never have bred in any breast but in the depths of eternal wisdom, and let us abandon and forsake our own vain imaginations and foolish inventions, let us become fools in our own eyes, that we may become wise. Man by seeking to be wise, became a fool, that was an unhappy invention; now its turned contrary, let all men take with their folly and desperate wickednesse, Let not the vain thoughts and dreams of our own well-being and sufficiency lodge within us, and we shall be made wise, come to the Fathers wisdom, unto Jesus Christ, who is that blessed invention of Heaven for our remedie. *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within you? O when will you be washed from them, how long shall not your thoughts transcend this temporal and bodily life? How long do you imagine to live in sin and die in the Lord, to continue in sin and escape wrath? Why do ye delude your souls with a dream of having interest in the love of God, and purchasing his favour by your works? These are some of these many inventions man hath sought out.*

Rom. 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death past upon all men, for that all have sinned.*

THis is a sad subject to speak upon, yet it is not more sad then usefull, though it be unpleasant to hold out a glasse to men to see their own vile faces into, yet is it profitable, yea, and so necessary, that till once a soul apprehend its broken and desolare condition in the first *Adam*, it can never heartily imbrace and come to the second *Adam*. You have here the wofull and dreadfull effects and consequents of the first transgression upon all mankind, the effect is twofold, sin and misery, or sin and death, the subject is universal in both, all men, the whole world. Behold what a flood of calamity hath entered at a smal crannie, By one mans transgression? May it not be said of sin in general, which the wise man speaks of strife, the beginning of sin is as when one lets out water, therefore it had been good leaving it off before it had been medled with, it entered at a small hole but it hath overflowed a whole world since.

That which first occures, is, that all mankind proceeding from *Adam* by ordinary birth are involved in sin by *Adams* transgression. But that may seem a hard saying, that sin and death should flow unto the whole posterity who had no accetion to *Adams* transgression. It would seem that every man should die for his own iniquity and that it should reach no further in Justice. But consider a pray you, the relation that *Adam* stood into, and in which he is here holden out as a figure of Christ. *Adam* the first man was a common person representing all mankind,

in whose happinesse or misery all should share; God contracts with him on these terms, that his posterities estate should depend on his behaviour. Now if all mankind would have reaped the benefite and advantage of *Adams* perseverance, if such an undeserved reward of eternal life would have redounded by the free promise unto them all, what iniquity is it that they also be sharers in his misery, our stock and treasure was ventured in this vessel, and if we were to partake of its gain, why not of its lose; You see among men, children have one common lot with their Parents, if the father be fore-faulted, the heirs suffer in it, and are cast out of the inheritance: It might appear a surer way to have the fortunes of all (so to speak) depend upon one, and their happinesse assured unto them upon the standing of one, then to have every one left unto himself, and his own well-being depending upon his own standing, as it is more likely one, and that the first one shall not sin, then many, and especially when that one knew that the weight of all his posterity hung upon him, it might have made him very circumspect, knowing of how great moment his carriage was? but certainly we must look a little higher then such reasons, there was a glorious purpose of Gods predominant in this, else there was no naturall necessity of imputing *Adams* sin to the children not yet born, or propagating it to the children; He that brought a holy one and undefiled out of a Virgin who was defiled, could have brought all others clean out of unclean parents, but there is a higher counsel about it, the Lord would have all men subject to his judgement, all men once guilty, once in an equal state of misery, to illustrate that special grace shewed in Christ the more, and demonstrate his power and wrath upon others. That which concerns us most is to believe this, that sin hath overspread all, and to have the lively impression of this were of more moment to true Religion, then many discourses
upon

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upon it. I had rather ye went home not cursing *Adam*, or murmuring against the most high, but bemoaning your selves for your wretched estate, that ye be able to give reasons for the general imputation and propagation of sin. Ye all see it is, and therefore you would rather mourn for it, then ask why it is?

There is sin entered into the world by imputation, and also by propagation. *Adams* first sin and hainous transgression is charged upon all his posterity, and imputed unto them, even unto them who have not sinned according to the similitude of *Adams* transgression, that is, actually as he did. Infants whom you call innocents (and indeed so they are in respect of you who are come to age) yet they are guilty before God of that sin that ruined all. Now that you may know what you are, and what little reason you have to be pleased with your selves, and absolve your selves as ye do; I shall unbowel that iniquity unto you. First, There was in it, an open banner displayed against God; When the soveraign Lord had enjoined his creature such a testimony of his homage and loyalty, and that so easie to be performed, and such as not a whit could abate from his happiness, what open rebellion was it to refuse it? It was a casting off the soveraign dominion of God, then which nothing can be more hainous, as if the clay should refuse to serve the Potters pleasure, and therefore it is eminently and signally stiled disobedience, as having nothing in it but the pure naked nature of disobedience, no difficulty to excuse it, for it was most easie; no pleasure to plead for it, for there were as good fruit beside, and a world of them; No necessity to extenuate it, so that you can see nothing in it but the ugly face of disobedience and rebellion, *vers. 19.* Whereby man draweth himself from his alleadgeance due to his Maker, and shaketh off the yoke in reproach of the most High. Next you may behold the vile and abominable face of ingratitude

gratitude and unthankfulnesse in it, and truly heathens have so abhorred unthankfulnesse towards men that they could not digest the reproach of it. *Ingratum si dixeris, omnia dixeris*: If you call me unthankfull, you may call me any thing, or all things, its a compend of all vices; Its even iniquity grown to maturity and ripenesse: but that such a fruit should grow out of such a holy a good soil, so well dressed and manured by the Lord, was a wonder. Lord what was man that thou so magnified him, and made him a little lower then the Angels? That thou put all things sublunarie, under his feet, and exalted him above them. For that creature chosen and selected from among all to be his minion, to stand in his presence, adorned and beautified with such gifts and graces, magnified with such glorious priviledges, made according to the most excellent patern, His own Image, to forget all, and forget so soon, and when he had such a spacious Garden to make use of (as is supposed to make up the third part of the earth) to eat of no fruit but that which was forbidden, there is no such monstrous ingratitude can be imagined as here was acted. But then consider the two fountains from which this flowed, unbelief and pride, and ye shall find it the heaviest sin in the world, unbelief of his word and threatning, first he was brought to question it and doubt of it, and then to deny it. A word so solemnly and particularly told him by the truth it self, that ever a question of it could arise in his mind or get entry, what else was it, then to imput iniquity to the holy one? And that iniquity of falshood and lying, which his nature most abhorres? What was it to blaspheme the most high and faithfull God, by harkning to the suggestions of his enemy, and credit them more then the threatnings of God? To give the very flat contradiction to God, *we shall not die*, and to assent so heartily to Satans slanders and reproaches of God. And this unbelief opened a door to ambition and pride, the most

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most sacrilegious ingredient of all, which is most opposite to God, and unto which he most opposed himself from the beginning. *You shall be like gods.* Was he not happy enough already, and according to Gods Image? Nay, but this evil principle would arise up to the Throne of God and sit down in his stead. Pride hath atheisme in it, to deny the God, and yet would be a god it self. For the fool stood to lift up it self thus, what an indignity was it, and indeed this wretched aime at so high an end hath thrown us down as low as hell. You see then how injurious this transgression was to God. There was disobedience and rebellion in it, which denied his dominion and supremacy, there was unthankfulness, in it denying his goodnesse and bounety, there was unbelief in it contradicting his truth and fullnesse, and finally pride opposing it self to all that is in God, reaching up to his very crown of Majesty to take it off. You see then what you are guilty in being guilty of *Adams* transgression, many of you flatters your selves in your own eyes, that ye have not done much evil, and ye will justify your selves in your comparisons with others? but I beseech you consider this, though you had never done personally good or evil, here that which drowned the world in misery is your sin, and charged upon you you are guilty of that which ruined all mankind, and makes the Creation subject to vanity and corruption. O if ye believed this, ye would find more need of the second *Adam* then ye do, O how precious would his righteousness and obedience be to you, if ye had rightly apprehended your interest in the first mans disobedience.

But besides this imputation there is much more propagated unto all, and that is a total corruption and depravation of nature in soul and body, where by man is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is truly and spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which

which is commonly called Original sin: a total aver-
 sion from God, and from all goodnesse, an antipa-
 thy against these wayes of holinesse, and a propen-
 sion and strong impulse towards evil, even as a stone
 moves downward: This poyson and contagion of
 sin entering into the world, hath infected all, and
 gone through all the members; neither is it any won-
 der it be so, when this leprosie hath defiled the walls
 and roof of the house, I mean, hath made the Crea-
 tion subject to vanity and corruption, it is no won-
 der, that it spread abroad in his issue, and make all
 unclean like himself: And truly this is it which most
 abuses mans nature, and being seen, would most humble
 men; yea, till this be discerned no man can be indeed
 humbled, he will never apprehend himself so bad
 as he is, but still imagine some excellency in himself,
 till he see himself in this glasse; you talk of good
 natures, and good dispositions, *But in our flesh* (saith
 the Apostle) *dwels no good thing*, the seeds of all
 wickednesse are in every one of us, and its the good-
 nesse of God for preserving of humane society, that
 they are restrained and kept down in any from the
 grossest out-breakings. They know not themselves
 who know any good of themselves, and they know
 not themselves who either are in admiration at, or
 in bitternesse or contempt against other finners,
 whose sins are manifest to all. This were the only
 way to profite by looking on others evils, if we
 could straight way retire within and behold the root
 of that in our selves, the fountain of it within us,
 and so grow in loathing not of these persons, but of
 humane nature, and in futeable thoughts of our
 selves and others, and might wonder at the good-
 nesse and undeserved bounty of the Lord that passeth
 an act of restraint upon our corruption, and dams it
 up. Oh that we could learn to loath our selves in
 other mens evils, thus we might reap good out of
 the evil, and prevent more in our selves: But the
 looking upon grosse provocations as singularities,

make them more general, because every man do not charge himself with the corruption that is in all these, but preferreth himself to another, therefore are reins loosed to corruption, and a flint opened, that it may come out, that he who would not see his own image in anothers face, may behold it in the glasse of his own abominations. There is no point lesse believed then this, though generally confessed that man is dead in sins and trespasses, and is not potent to help himself. You will hardly take your wickedness when you confesse weaknesse, as if men were only sick, but not dead, hurt, but not killed: therefore it is that so many do abide in themselves, and trusting to their own good purposes and resolutions and endeavours, do think to pacifie God, and help themselves out of their misery. But, O man, look again, and look in upon your selves in the glasse of the Word, and there is no doubt but you will straightway be filled with confusion of face, and be altogether spoiled of good confidence and hope, as you call it: you will find your self plunged in a pit of misery, and all strength gone, and none on the right hand or the left to help you, and then, and not then, will the second *Adams* hand stretched out to help be seasonable.

That which next follows, is that which is the companion of sin inseparably, *Death hath past upon* and that by sin. *Adams* one disobedience opened a port for all sin to enter upon mankind, and sin cannot enter without this companion death. Sin goeth before, and death follows on the back of it, and they suite one another, as the work and the wages, the tree and the fruit, they have a fibnesse one to another, sowing to corruption, reaps an answerable harvest, to wit, corruption: Sowing to the wind, and reaping the whirle-wind, how suitable are they. That men may know how evil and bitter a thing sin is, he maketh this the fruit of it, in his first Law and sanction given out to men, he joyntly

them

them inseparably, sin and death, sin and wrath, sin and a curse.

By death is not only meant bodily death, which is the separation of the soul from the body, but first the spiritual death of the soul, consisting in a separation of the soul from Gods blessed enlightening, enlivening and comforting countenance: Mans true life wherein he differs from beasts, consists in the right aspect of God upon his soul, in his walking with God, and keeping communion with him; all things besides this are but common and base, and this was cut off: His comfort, his joy and peace in God extinct, God became terrible to his conscience; and therefore man did flee and was afraid when he heard his voice in the Garden. Sin being interposed between God and the soul, cut off all the influence of Heaven: Hence ariseth darknesse of mind, hardnesse of heart, delusions, vile affections, horrors of conscience. Look what difference is between a living creature and a dead carcase, so much is between *Adams* soul upright, living in God, and *Adams* soul separated from God by sin. Then upon the outward man the curse redounds, the body becomes mortall which had been incorruptible, its now like a besieged City, now some utter Forts are gained by diseases, now by pains and torments, the outward walls of the body are at length overcome, and when life hath fled into a Castle within the City, the heart, that is at last of all besieged so straitly, and stormed so violently, that it must render unto death upon any terms, the body of man is even a seminary of a world of diseases and grievances, that if men could look upon it aright, they might see the sentence of death every day performed. Then how many evils in estate, in friends, and relations, in imployments, which being considered by Heathens, hath made them praise the dead more then the living, but not yet born most of all, because the present is nothing else but a valley of misery and tears.

of troubles, where one wave continually prevents another, and comes one like *Jobs* messengers, before one speak out his wofull tydings, another comes with such like, or worse. But that which is the full and accomplishment of Gods curse and mans misery, is that death to come, eternal death, not death simply, but an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power: An infinite loss because the losse of such a glorious life in the enjoyment of Gods presence; and an infinite hurt and torment beside, and both eternal. Now this is that we would lay before you: you are under such a heavy sentence from the womb, a sentence of the Almighty adjudging you for *Adams* guilt, and your own, to all the misery in this world, and the next to all the treasures of wrath that are heaped up against the day of wrath; and strange it is how we can live in peace; and not be troubled in mind, who have so great and formidable a party. Be perswaded. O be perswaded that there shall not one jot of this be removed, it must be fulfilled in you or your Conscience, and why then is a Saviour offered, a Gate of refuge opened, and secure sinners will not go into it. But as for as many as have the inward dress full apprehension of this wrath to come, and know not what to do, know that to you is Jesus Christ Preached, the second *Adam*, a quickning Spirit, and in that consideration better then the first, not only a living soul himself, but a Spirit to quicken you who are dead in sins, one that hath undertaken for you and will hold you fast: *Adam* who should have kept us, lost himself, Christ in a manner lost himself to save us; And as by *Adams* disobedience all this sin and misery hath abounded on man, know that the second *Adam* his obedience and righteousness is of greater virtue and efficacy to save, and in stead of sin to restore righteousness, and in stead of death to give life, therefore you may come to him and you shall be more surely kept then before.

1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithfull saying, and worthy of all acceptation; that Jesus Christ came in the world to save sinners.*

OF all Doctrines that ever were published to men, this contained here is the choicest; as you see the very preface prefixed to it imports; And truly, as it is the most excellent in it self, it could not but be sweet unto us, if we had received into the heart the belief of our own wretchedness and misery. I do not know a more sovereign cordial for a fainting soul, then this faithfull saying, *That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*; and therefore we are most willing to dwell on this subject, and to inculcate it often upon you, that without him you are undone and lost, and in him you may be saved. I professe all other subjects (howsoever they might be more pleasing to some hearers) are unpleasant and unsavory to me. This is that we would once learn and ever be learning to know him that came to save us, and come to him.

We laboured to shew unto you the state of sin and misery that *Adams* first transgression hath subjected all mankind unto, which if it were really and truly apprehended: I do not think but it would make this saying welcome to your souls. Man being plunged into such a deep pit of misery, sin and death having overflowed the whole world, and this being seen and acknowledged by a sinner, certainly the next question in order of nature is this, hath God left all to perish in this estate, is there any remedy provided for sin and misery? And this will be indeed the query of a self-condemned sinner. Now there is a plank after this broken ship, there is an answer sweet and

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satisfactory to this question, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

We shall not expatiate into many notions of this, or multiply many branches of this. The matter is plain and simple, and we desire to hold it plainly and simply, that this is the remedy of sin and misery. When none could be found on the right hand or left hand. Hear a Saviour from Heaven come down from above, whence no good could be expected, because a good God was provoked. Can any good come out of Nazareth, that was a proof concerning him. But I think in some sense it may be said, can any good come down from Heaven, from his holy habitation to this accursed earth, could any thing be expected from Heaven but wrath and vengeance? And if no good could be expected that way, what way could it come? Sure if not from Heaven then from no Airt: Yet from heaven our help comes, from whence it could not be looked for, even from him who was offended, and his justice engaged against man, that he might both satisfy justice and save man, that he might not wrong himself nor destroy man utterly, he sends his only begotten Son equal with himself in Majesty and glory into the world in the state of a servant, to accomplish mans salvation, and perform him satisfaction. Therefore Christ came into the world to save sinners.

There were two grand impediments in the way of mans salvation, which made it impossible to man, one is Gods justice, another is mans sin, these two behoved to be satisfied or removed e're there could be access to save a sinner. The sentence of divine justice is pronounced against all mankind. *Death on all* A sentence of death and condemnation: Now when the righteousness and faithfulness of God is engaged into this, how strong a party do you think that must be. What power can break that prison of a divine curse, and take out a sinner from under justice hand? Certainly there is no coming out of the

the utmost farthing be payed that was owing, till compleat satisfaction be given to all wrongs. Now truly the redemption of the soul had ceased for ever (its so precious that no creature can give any thing in exchange for it) except Jesus Christ had come into the world, one that might be able to tread that wine-press of wrath alone, and give his life a ransom, in value far above the soul, and pay the debt of sin that we were owing to God. And indeed he was furnished for this purpose, a person suited and fitted for such a work, a man to undertake it in our name, and God to perform it in his own strength; A man, that he might be made under the Law, and be humbled even to the death of the crosse, that so he might obey the commandment, and suffer the punishment due to us, and all this was elevated beyond the worth of created actions or sufferings, by that divine nature; this perfumed all his humanity, and all done by it or in it, this put the stamp of divinity upon all, and imposed an infinite value upon the coyn of finite obedience and sufferings; And so in his own person by coming into the world, and acting and suffering in the place of sinners, he hath taken the first great impediment out of the way, taken down the high wall of divine justice which he had enclosed round about the sinner, and satisfied all its demands by paying the price, so there is nothing upon Gods part to accuse or condemn, to hinder or obstruct salvation.

But then there is an inner wall or dark dungeon of sin, into which the sinner is shut up, and reserved in chains of his own lusts, untill the time of everlasting darknesse, and when Heaven is opened by Christs death, yet this keeps a sinner from entering in. Therefore Jesus Christ who came himself into the world to satisfy Justice, and remove its plea, that there might be no obstruction from that airt, he sendeth out his powerfull Spirit with the Word, to deliver poor captive sinners, to break down the wall of ignorance and blindnesse, to cast down the high

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high Tower of wickednesse and enmity against God, to take captive and chain our lusts, that kept us in bondage: And as he made Heaven accessible by his own personal obedience and sufferings, so he makes sinners ready and free to enter into that salvation by his Spirits working in their persons. In the one he had, God as it were, his party, and him he hath satisfied so far, that there was a voice came from Heaven to testifie it, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, and therefore in testimony of it, God raised him from the dead. In the other, he hath Satan and mans wicked nature as his party, and these he must conquere and subdue, these he must overcome ere we can be saved, a strange businesse indeed, and a great work, to bring such two opposite and distant parties together, a holy and just God, and a sinfull and rebellious creature, and to take them both as parties that he might reconcile both.

Now what do you think of this, my beloved? that such a glorious Person is come down from Heaven, for such a work as the salvation of sinners. I put no doubt it would be most acceptable unto you, if you knew your misery, and knowing your misery you could not but accept it, if you believed that it were true and faithfull. I find one of two the great obstruction in the way of souls receiving advantage by such glad tydings, either the absolute necessity and excellency of the Gospel is not considered, or the truth and reality of it is not believed. Men either do not behold the beauty of goodnesse in it, or do not see the light of truth in it, either there is nothing discovered to engage their affections, or nothing seen to perswade their understandings. Therefore the Apostle sounds a Trumpet, as it were, in the entry, before the publication of these glad news, and commends this unto all men as a true and faithfull saying, and as worthy of all acceptation. There is here the highest truth and certainty to satisfy the mind, *It is a faithfull saying*, and there

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is here also the chiefeſt good to ſatiate the heart, *its* worthy of *all* acceptation. Now, if you do really apprehend your loſt and miſerable eſtate, you cannot but behold that raviſhing goodneſſe in it, and behold that you cannot, till you ſee the other firſt; Whence is it, I pray you, that ſo many ſouls are never ſtirred with the propoſition of ſuch things in the Goſpel, that the riches and beauty of ſalvation in Jeſus Chriſt doth not once move them? Is it not becauſe there is no lively apprehenſion of their miſery without him.

F I N I S.

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